DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 618 CG 024 436

TITLE	America's Families: Conditions, Trends, Hopes and Fears. Hearing before the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families. House of Representatives, One Hundred Second Congress, Second Session.
INSTITUTION	Congress of the U.S., Washington, DC. House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-16-038919-4
PUB DATE	19 Feb 92
NOTE	292p.
AVAILABLE FROM	U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328.
PUB TYPE	Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC12 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Family (Sociological Unit); Family Problems; Family Programs; Hearings; Public Policy; Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS	Congress 102nd

ABSTRACT

The text of a hearing on American families is presented in this document. Comments by Representatives Patricia Schroeder, Bob McEwen, Michael Bilirakis, Frank Wolf, and Jim Bacchus, as well as Senator John D. Rockefeller, IV, are presented. Testimony and/or prepared statements and materials are included from these persons: (1) Gary L. Bauer, president, Family Research Council, Washington, D.C.; (2) David Blankenhorn, president, Institute for American Values, New York, New York; (3) Vincent Breglio, president, RSM, Inc., Lanham, Maryland; (4) Greg Duncan, program director, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan; (5) Donald Hernandez, chief, Marriage and Families Statistics Branch, Population Division, Bureau 20 of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C.; (6) Celinda Lake, vice president, Greenberg-Lake, Washington, D.C.; (7) Thomas Plewes, Associate Commissioner for Employment and Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor; (8) Robert Rector, policy analyst for Family and Welfare Issues, The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.; (9) Judith Weitz, KIDS COUNT Coordinator, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, Washington, D.C.; (10) Jason Zimbler, Nickelodeon Show "Clarissa Explains It All," New York, New York; (11) William Archer III, M.D.; and (12) Frances McNaught of the U.S. Department of Labor. (ABL)

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AMERICA'S FAMILIES: CONDITIONS, TRENDS, HOPES AND FEARS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC,
FEBRUARY 19, 1992

Printed for the use of the
Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

55-778 WASHINGTON : 1992

For sale by the U.S. Government Printing Office
Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328

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"AMERICA'S FAMILIES: CONDITIONS, TRENDS, HOPES AND FEARS"

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1992

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 2222, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Patricia Schroeder, [chairwoman of the committee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Schroeder, Sarpalius, Bacchus, Peterson, Wolf, Holloway, Walsh, McEwen, Bilirakis, Klug, Camp, Riggs, and Barrett.

Staff present: Karabelle Pizzigati, staff director, Jill Kagan, deputy staff director; Nancy Reder, professional staff; Thomas Brooks, professional staff; Carol Statuto, deputy staff director; Mary Jordan, staff assistant; Elizabeth Maier, professional staff; and Joan Godley, committee clerk.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. I think we will go ahead and call the hearing to order because we have 11 witnesses and a frantic day, and a "gazillion" other things that are going on.

Welcome, Senator, you always stand head and shoulders above the crowd so we can see you when you get here. And, Jason, if you would like to sit next to the Senator, I'm sure he would be happy to meet you.

We want to welcome everybody to the hearing, and we're sorry it's so crowded. It's such a busy day, this is the biggest room we could get, but I'm very pleased, and I think it's going to be a very, very exciting day.

I'm going to put my formal statement in the record because I think we all want to move right along. I think this is a very interesting day to have this, right after New Hampshire, where there was a real rendezvous with reality. There is no rendezvous with reality like a rendezvous with voters, and we saw that yesterday.

As a mother, I never want to say "I told you so" because I got too tired of that as a young person, but four years ago when we were in New Hampshire, I remember we scheduled our "Great American Family Tour" during the Super Bowl, which wasn't too swift, and yet we outdrew most all of the candidates, in all the meetings they had been having the whole time, so we could really sense there was something going on about family. It was kind of like a "sunami," we didn't know when it was coming but you could kind of feel it out there, and today I think it's going to be very in-

teresting to talk to pollsters and many others, about did they see it and what does it mean.

I guess the summary that I have is when I look at how people, at least in my area, feel, they feel the lesson of the '80s was that you could either be upwardly mobile or you could have children, and that is not what they thought America was about. And I think that that's an awful lot of what we saw yesterday, what people are dealing with, and so I will be interested to see if others felt the same thing.

[Opening statement of Hon. Patricia Schroeder follows:]

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. PATRICIA SCHROEDER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF COLORADO AND CHAIRWOMAN, SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

Is Washington out of step with America's families? That is the question we're going to try to answer today. As yesterday's New Hampshire primary shows, voters clearly want their government to listen to them.

Much has been said of late about middle America, what families need to survive, and how children perceive their future. But what do the nation's families look like today, what has been happening to them over the last decade, and what do they think about their prospects for the future?

The hearing we are holding today is the first in a series the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families plans to hold to define middle-income families and to quantify key indicators of their well-being: economic security, family values, and quality of life.

Today we will examine the economic status, consumer confidence, and general well-being of the nation's children and families, and their prospects for the future. Our goal is to explore ways to make the government and the workplace more family friendly.

While economic security may seem the easiest to quantify, many experts have said that being "middle-income" is a state of mind more than a reflection of a designated annual salary. If that is true, then I'm sure most U.S. families consider themselves middle income. Regardless of their earnings, families today are worried about their economic security, their future, and the future of their children.

Families across America worry about paying their mortgage and saving for their children's college education. They worry about how to maintain their health care coverage and still pay for child care.

The bulk of American families—the bulk of American taxpayers—earning at or around the median income, worry about all these things, and then they worry about just staying economically afloat. They may be just one paycheck away from desperate conditions. The car breaking down, child care arrangements unraveling, factory closing or employer bankruptcy can mean the loss of a job and a plunge into poverty.

These families have stopped looking to the economy, to the job market, even to the federal government for relief. And it's no surprise because the federal government has had little to offer.

Congress did good things when it expanded the earned income credit to working poor families, extended unemployment benefits, provided child care assistance to families earning up to 75 percent of state median income, and extended Medicaid benefits to poor pregnant women and children. But what has government done for the majority of the nation's families who are realistically concerned and frustrated, with little hope for the future? What has the government done for those who earn too much to get sufficient help with their child care expenses or with health insurance, but who teeter at the edge of poverty?

According to the Congressional Research Service, nonpoor children and their families have access to only slightly more than one-third of all federal programs for children and families. The remainder are restricted to, or place an emphasis on, serving poor children and youth. And the resources for all of these programs have been shrinking.

This morning, government experts will help us define demographic, social and economic changes over the last decade, but we will also hear about what families are feeling and how they are coping.

We are honored to have with us today Senator Jay Rockefeller, Chairman of the National Commission on Children, who will discuss the commission's latest survey

of parents and children that will shed some light on changing family values. We also have with us several pollsters who have their hand on the pulse of America's families, as well as a very special representative from Nickelodeon who will share some interesting information about what today's children are feeling about the quality of their lives and their hopes for the future.

I welcome all of you.

AMERICA'S FAMILIES: CONDITIONS, TRENDS, HOPES AND FEARS

A FACT SHEET

FAMILY SIZE CONTINUES TO SHRINK/MORE COUPLES POSTPONE STARTING FAMILIES

- Families are postponing having children, and are having fewer of them. In 1973, 6 out of 10 families had at least one child under age 18 and the average number of children per family was 2.2. In 1990, only about half of all families had a child under 18, and the average number of children was 1.8. (U.S. Bureau of the Census [Census], 1992)

- Of all families with children, the proportion with one parent increased from 13% in 1970 to 28% in 1990. (Census, 1990)

- The proportion of households without children headed by 25 to 44 year-olds nearly doubled from 20% in 1960 to 37% in 1988. Households without children have a median income per person that is 67% higher than households with two children. (Fuchs & Reklis, 1992)

FAMILY INCOMES STAGNATE DESPITE MOTHERS IN THE LABOR FORCE

- Of all families with children, the percentage with two parents or the only parent in the labor force rose from 56% in 1980 to 66% in 1991. (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 1992)

- Between 1979 and 1989, two-parent families with children in the middle fifth of the income spectrum ($35,000-$47,000 in 1989) experienced a 4% increase in income. Wives' $3,300 increase in average earnings accounted for this increase, but four-fifths of this gain came from increased hours rather than from increased hourly pay. (Joint Economic Committee, 1992)

- Real median income of young families with children declined from $23,705 (in 1990 dollars) in 1970 to $16,219 in 1990, a 32% decrease. (Census, 1992)

- Middle-income, dual-earner families with a wife employed outside the home lose up to 56% of the additional income to work-related expenses. (Hanson and Ooms, 1991)

MILLIONS OF FAMILIES TEETER ON EDGE OF POVERTY/MANY FALL IN

- From 1980 to 1990, the number of families with children living in poverty increased by 854,000 to a rate of 16.4%. (Census, 1991)

- From July 1989 through November 1991, 900,000 families were added to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, reaching a new caseload record of 4.6 million families. Two thousand children a day go on AFDC; one in seven American children receives AFDC. (American Public Welfare Association, 1992)

  In November 1991, 24.6 million Americans received food stamps, a 15% increase over November 1990. One in ten Americans receives food stamps. (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA], 1992)

- Forty-three percent of the increase in poverty between 1979 and 1989 was due to the reduced effectiveness of AFDC, Food Stamps, Unemployment Insurance, and other government benefit programs. (Committee on Ways and Means [Ways and Means], U.S. House of Representatives, 1991)

CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING PLUMMETS

- Children are the poorest Americans. While the poverty rate for all Americans was 13.5% in 1990, 20.6% of children lived in poverty, up from 18.3% in 1980. Among children under age 6, 23% lived in poverty in 1990, up from 20.3% in 1980. (Census, 1991)

- The teenage suicide rate tripled from 3.6/100,000 in 1960 to 11.3/100,000 in 1988. Between 1980 and 1988 alone, the teen suicide rate increased more than 30%. (Fuchs and Reklis, 1992)

- U.S. school children ranked 14th in math and 13th in science abilities in a 15-country international comparison of 13-year-olds. Standardized test scores fell between 1988 and 1991, with results

on the verbal portion reaching an all-time low. (Educational Testing Service, 1992; Fuchs and Reklis, 1992)

FINANCIAL PRESSURES ON FAMILIES MOUNT

- It will cost a middle-income family ($26,000 - $42,000 in 1987 pre-tax income) an estimated $210,070 to raise a child born in 1990 to age 17. (USDA, 1991)

- Of the 36 million Americans without health insurance, children constitute 28%. Two-thirds of uninsured children live in families where at least one person was employed throughout 1990. (Employee Benefit Research Institute, 1992)

- Average annual health payments by families amounted to 11.7% of average family income in 1991, up from 9% of average family income in 1980. Based on current projections, average health payments will consume 16.4% of average family income by the year 2000. (Families USA Foundation, 1991)

- The cost of a college education continues to outpace inflation. In 1989/90, the average cost of a four-year postsecondary education ranged from $4,979 at a public institution to $12,348 at a private one. The comparable figures for 1976/77 were $1,935 and $3,977. (U.S. Department of Education, 1991)

- Families spend an estimated $15.5 billion annually on child care. (Census, 1990)

FAMILY DEBT RISES; PERSONAL SAVINGS DECLINE

- Outstanding household debt rose approximately $2 trillion (to a total of about $3 trillion) during the 1980s. (Economic Policy Institute, 1990)

- The personal savings rate fell from 7.9% of disposable personal income in 1980 to 5.3% in 1991. (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992)

INCREASING UNEMPLOYMENT THREATENS FAMILIES' ECONOMIC SECURITY

- The unemployment rate rose from 5.2% in June 1990 to 7.1% in January 1992. But in 1991, just 42% of the unemployed received unemployment compensation, compared with 75% in 1975. (Ways and Means, 1992)

- During the fourth quarter of 1989, 5.6% of families with children had an unemployed parent. That figure rose to 7.4% during the fourth quarter of 1991. (BLS, 1992)

- The number of workers employed part time involuntarily rose from 4.4% in 1980 to 5.2% in 1991. (BLS, 1992)

PROVIDING A HOME REMAINS DIFFICULT FOR FAMILIES

- Homeownership rates among young households fell sharply during the 1980s. For households aged 25-29, homeownership fell from 43% in 1980 to 36% in 1990, while for households aged 30-34, the rate dropped from 61% to 52%. (Joint Center for Housing Studies [JCHS], 1991)

- Of married-couple families with children, 91% of renters and 32% of homeowners cannot afford a median-priced home in their region. (Census, 1991)

- With rents rising and income stagnating, rent burdens remain high. In 1990, the gross rent burden held at 28.1%, down only marginally from the mid-1980s peak. (JCHS, 1991)

February 19, 1992

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. I think Mr. Wolf is on his way but, Mr. McEwen, do you have anything you want to——

Mr. MCEWEN. Thank you. I have a statement I'd like to have entered in the record.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Without objection, no problem.

[Prepared statements of Hon. Bob McEwen and Hon. Michael Bilirakis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BOB MCEWEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Mrs. Chairwoman, today, we have a valuable opportunity to examine American family life. The witness list includes experts from the Bureau of the Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and pollsters armed with data collected from national surveys.

While we can certainly argue about whose definition of family we are willing to assume is most reflective of reality, it is most important that as a society we are willing to do what is necessary to preserve the things of value that families accomplish. Without recognition of the value of strong families in society, we have only meaningless numbers.

There are numbers which give us insight into what families look like. There are also numbers which help us understand what families believe they want and need. Polls show that Americans routinely express support for broadly stated conceptual objectives about children's programs such as the desire to feed, clothe and care for every child. That certainly shouldn't surprise anyone.

When asked how to pay for government programs to accomplish these goals, the polls show an apparent unwillingness. For example, in a study by the Public Agenda Foundation examining how Americans think about social welfare programs and what they are willing to pay for them, it was found that only a minority of those interviewed indicated a willingness to pay more than $25 per year for new social programs.

There are also polls that show that while the American people are often prepared to say that the government should provide certain services or programs, they do not believe that government is efficient or reliable. For example, a November 1990 survey by Hamilton and Staff showed that 8 out of 10 thought the federal budget could be balanced by "cutting waste and fraud" rather than by cutting "essential spending or raising taxes."

It is essential that this committee recognize that a strong family is the best Department of Health and Human Services ever created, and that government imitations will always be a pale second in comparison. Pro-family policies should address the needs of families by supporting and strengthening families, not attempting to replace them.

The best thing that we can do for the American family, and the country as a whole, is ensure that the family is an economically viable structure to raise children—tomorrow's workforce. Today, they are vastly overtaxed because the dependent deduction is thousands of dollars smaller than it should be.

Along with lower taxes, the economy must grow so that working parents can earn good enough wages to support healthy families. We all worry about children, but these are really goals that will help all American families, and ensure children grow up in the best possible environment.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Madam Chairwoman, I commend you for holding this hearing today to stress the importance of the welfare of our Nation's children—their educational and health needs. I believe that our Nation's children are the key to our future and, as policymakers, we must always keep the well-being of children in the forefront of our minds. I have supported funding for important children's programs in the past, and will continue to do my part to promote children's causes with my vote in the future.

For example, I have been a strong supporter of Head Start throughout the years. Head Start, which provides eduction and social services to low-income 3- and 4-year-olds, helps these youngsters start school on the same level as their counterparts from higher income backgrounds. These children start school with a positive outlook and ready to learn. A well-managed and effective program like this one deserves

recognition and support. Likewise, President Bush has endorsed the program by increasing its funding in his budget proposal by 27 percent over fiscal year 1992. This increase would fully fund the program to allow all eligible 3-year-olds the opportunity to participate.

In addition, I support the women, infants, and children (WIC) Supplemental Food Program. This program provides basic nutritional food for low-income pregnant women and their young children. For women who are unable to provide nutritional foods for their infants and children, this program helps ensure that these children will not be malnourished—instead, they will be able to develop properly at a young age. This program is also very cost-efficient: The Department of Agriculture has found that every $1 invested in WIC for a pregnant woman saves about $4 in State and Federal Medicaid costs for mothers and their newborn infants.

Elementary and secondary education is also of paramount importance. I support the President's America 2000 initiative, a proposal designed to help States reevaluate the way in which children are educated and implement innovative programs in the classroom. America 2000 encourages parents and other members of the community to take an active role in education and focuses the Nation on six national goals. By putting a national focus on the importance of education, we are committing ourselves to our Nation's economy and our Nation's future.

Madame Chairwoman and members of the committee, we must recognize the importance of programs, like the ones I have mentioned, that provide invaluable services for children—services that enable them to grow up to be healthy and educated adults. Our future generation deserves no less.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Do you have anything you would like to put in the record?

Mr. BACCHUS. Thank you, Madam Chair. Just very briefly, I would like to welcome Senator Rockefeller. I'm a fan of yours. But I would especially like to welcome Jason. I'm a big fan of yours. My district includes the new film production in the area of central Florida, and Jason does a lot of work down there. Nickelodeon Studios is there, and I want to congratulate him for his fine performance on television, which I frequently watch with my son and my wife, and I want to congratulate Nickelodeon on all the work that they do with children. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Mr. Barrett, do you have anything you want to say?

Mr. BARRETT. Madam Chair, I, too, have a statement that I would ask be inserted into the record, please.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Without objection, no problem. Well, okay, you two, the floor is yours. Everybody knows Senator Rockefeller and his very prestigious and wonderful work leading the Children's Commission and, of course, everybody knows you, too, Jason. Now, I don't know who is going to go first. Are you going to arm wrestle, or——

Mr. ZIMBLER. I will yield.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. You're going to yield to the Senator. This young man is on his way. He figured this out. Okay. That's no nonsense. Senator, we welcome you, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV, A U.S. SENATOR IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA; CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CHILDREN, WASHINGTON, DC

Senator ROCKEFELLER. That's called working within the system. Jason is learning.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Yes, he's figured it out.

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Madam Chair, I am very happy, in fact, because tomorrow I am going to be introducing the income security package of the Children's Commission, and the effect of that income security package, if all the parts are taken together, will, in fact, lift the overwhelming majority of American families in pover-

ty out of poverty, and help every single family above poverty struggling to make ends meet, and it's a sensational package, and I just thought I'd give that quick promo before I dive in here for your subject of the morning.

I am obviously testifying on behalf the National Commission on Children. We took two surveys, in fact, that I think this committee will be interested in, and this committee itself has been incredibly valiant on the whole subject of children and families, obviously.

We were created as a commission to look at the health and well being of our children in this country, and then to recommend what to do about that, both in terms of public and private actions. The great majority of our recommendations are private, but some important ones are public.

And I am proud to say that although we had people all the way from the far right to the far left and all the way in between, with the exception of health care, it was a unanimous report. Everybody voted for it, including members of the Bush Administration who were on the commission.

We worked for two and a half years, and we combed a lot of the research that you have done in this committee. It was very, very helpful to us.

We wanted to hear from the people, particularly from children and their parents, so in addition to traveling to communities across the country and looking at life in American families and children, we also took some national surveys to try and get the insights from those. One of those consisted of face-to-face interviews with almost 1,400 adults, to see how the American public thinks parents and kids are doing, in fact, today. The second survey was a set of telephone interviews with more than 1,700 parents and their children, to see how they think and feel about their family lives, about their schools, other community institutions, their hopes, their fears, all of that.

We found that Americans are, frankly, worried, even pessimistic about their families' abilities to raise children today. Large percentages of American adults, regardless of age or race or whether they are raising children or not, for that matter, told us they believe it is far harder to be a parent today than it used to be. They believe that parents don't spend enough time with their children, that they can't spend enough time, as much as they want to. More than half believe the children are worse off today, in the supervision and discipline that they receive and in their moral and religious training.

At first, these findings seemed at odds with responses from children and parents themselves. When we asked parents and children about their own family lives, they reported fairly good news. When we talked about others', it changed, so we suspect the second told more of the truth.

Most parents still go to great lengths to give their children the time and the attention they need. Seventy percent of families dine together at least five nights a week. That surprised me. That's impressive.

Most parents maintain regular contact with their children's schools, monitor their school activities very closely, so what's the public worried about? Well, strong families and close ties between

the parents and children are great news, Madam Chair, but they are not the whole story.

The public sense that all is not well was confirmed by parents and children in these surveys, in middle class and poor families alike, who said they are paying a very high price for their closeness. They told us they feel pinched and burdened by too little time, too little money, too many absent parents, too much stress, too much fear about what's going on out in the street right outside their door, and all of the pressures that are just tearing American families apart.

Families are running faster, families are working harder, and they are just staying in place and they are not succeeding in many cases. Fifty-five percent of parents, regardless of income, race, or marital status, told us they worry at least some of the time that their income will not meet their family expenses, so they are working longer hours, which we know, they are spending less time with their children—less time than they wanted to—in order to be able to keep up on the income front.

Our surveys also highlighted the financial and emotional stresses facing single-parent families, and the special strengths of two-parent families.

As a commission, we said strongly that children do best when they have the involvement, material, and otherwise of two parents, but not everybody has that luxury.

Our survey bears this out in a powerful and poignant way. More than half of single parents said they worry all, or most of the time, that their income was not enough to meet their family expenses, compared to less than a quarter of two-parent families who worry about that same subject.

Only a third of children in single-parent families see their fathers at least weekly, and almost one in five children of single-parent families have not seen their fathers in five years.

We found with great sadness that parents of every income level and race are worried about their children's physical safety. Almost half of all parents surveyed said that there was no safe place in their neighborhood for children or teenagers to gather, other than their own homes.

How did we ever come to this, one might ask. Not surprisingly, urban poor families were the most concerned and the most fearful. Forty percent of urban poor parents worry that their children will get shot. Thirty-eight percent of urban poor children worry that somebody on drugs will hurt them. These children had less access to recreational programs, to clubs, other safe organized activities, and their parents just had many fewer friends to be able to turn to for help.

Our surveys also revealed that substantial percentages of teenagers of every race, of every income, of every kind of family, have friends who drink, who use drugs, cheat, steal and are sexually active. Peer pressure has an enormous and often tragic effect on teenagers.

One young man that we talked with at length at the place where he is currently residing, called peer pressure a "powerful psychological drug". He should know. He's serving a 30-year sentence for manslaughter. He is 18 years old.

Finally, many parents worry about the effects of popular culture on their children. Forty percent think that programs on network television—other than Nickelodeon—have a negative influence on children. I'll repeat that. About 40 percent think that programs on network television have a negative influence on children, and we can't run away from that. Half believe the same about television advertising, in and of itself. Just over half worry about the influence of popular music on children and teenagers.

Our surveys are additional evidence that Americans, whether they are raising children or not, are deeply concerned about the pressures that limit families' abilities to raise children well. They worry that the economic squeeze on middle class families is getting tighter every day, making it harder for parents to make ends meet while still giving children the time and the attention that the children need and that the parents want to give.

They fear that poor families have few legitimate roots out of poverty, and they worry that our failure as a society to invest time and to invest resources in children and in families will bankrupt this nation socially, economically, and politically.

From other surveys, Madam Chair, we also know that American people think that government does not care about average families, and hasn't a clue about how to address their needs.

Well, the National Commission on Children spent more than two and a half years listening and worrying about all of these matters. We listened to people in their homes, their schools, at town meetings, all over the country.

If our leaders of this country and those who are running up in New Hampshire and other places want to know what families are worried about, it's right here in the surveys that we have. If they want to know what ought to be done about it, the Children's Commission has laid out a comprehensive plan.

In our final report, we called on individuals, the private sector, the government at all levels, to invest more time and more resources to support and strengthen all families raising children.

One can argue about whether one gives an across-the-board middle income tax cut for economic stimulus or any other purpose. I think we shouldn't. I think if we're going to do it, we should give only to those who have children, which would mean two out of three families would not get, but it would be investing in what counts in this country's future. I'll stop there.

[Prepared statement of Hon. John D. Rockefeller IV follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV, A U.S. SENATOR IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA, AND CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CHILDREN, WASHINGTON, DC

Good morning. Madame Chairman and members of the Committee, it is a privilege to be asked to testify on behalf of the National Commission on Children, which I proudly chair. I have been asked to present the findings of two surveys we sponsored. But this is also a chance to thank this committee for your valiant work on behalf of children.

The National Commission on Children was created by Congress to investigate the health and well-being of the nation's children, and to then recommend the public and private actions necessary to support children and strengthen their families. In June of 1991, we released our final report, Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families, with the unanimous support of our members.

Our report was the product of an intensive, two-and-a-half year effort. We combed the research, including reports that your select committee issued.

In this process, we went to every length to hear directly from the American public -- especially children and their parents. So, in addition to our site visits and town meetings, we conducted two national surveys that provided valuable insights: One consisted of face-to-face interviews with almost 1,400 adults to see how the American public thinks parents and kids are doing today. The second was a set of telephone interviews with more than 1,700 parents and their children to see how they think and feel about their family lives, their schools and other community institutions, their hopes, fears, and concerns.

Through these surveys, we found that Americans are worried -- even pessimistic -- about families' ability to raise children today. Large percentages of American adults, regardless of age, race, and whether they are raising children, told us they believe it is harder to be a parent today than it used to be, and that parents don't spend enough time with their children. More than half believe that children are worse off today in the supervision and discipline they receive and in their moral or religious training.

At first, these findings seem at odds with responses from children and parents themselves. When we asked parents and children about their own family lives, they reported close relationships and strong family ties. Most parents still go to great lengths to give their children the time and attention they need. Seventy percent of families eat dinner together at least five nights a week. Most parents maintain regular contact with

their children's schools, and monitor their activities closely. So what's the public worried about?

Strong families and close ties between parents and children are great news -- but they're not the whole story. The public's sense that all is not well was confirmed by parents and children, in middle class and poor families alike, who said they are paying a high price for their closeness. They told us they feel pinched and burdened by too little time and money, too many absent parents, fears about children's safety, and other pressures tearing at the seams of family life. Families are running faster and working harder just to stay in place -- and they're not always succeeding.

Fifty-five percent of parents -- regardless of income, race, or marital status -- told us they worry at least some of the time that their income won't meet their family's expenses. So they are working longer hours. They are spending less time with their children than they'd like.

Our surveys also highlighted the financial and emotional stresses facing single-parent families -- and the special strengths of two-parent families. As a Commission, we said strongly that children do best when they have the involvement and material support of both parents. Our survey findings bear this out in a powerful and poignant way. More than half of single parents said they worry all or most of the time that their income will not be enough to meet their family expenses -- compared to less than a quarter of two-parent families. Only a third of children in single-parent families see their fathers at least weekly -- and almost one in five have not seen their fathers in five years.

We heard, with great sadness, that parents of every income level and race are worried about their children's physical safety. Almost half of all parents surveyed said that there was no safe place in their neighborhood for children and teenagers to gather, other than their own homes. How did we ever come to this?

Not surprisingly, urban poor families were the most concerned and fearful. Forty percent of urban poor parents worry that their children will get shot. Thirty-eight percent of urban poor children worry that someone on drugs will hurt them. These children also had less access to recreational programs, clubs, and other safe, organized activities, and their parents had fewer friends to turn to for help.

Our surveys also revealed that substantial percentages of teenagers -- of every race and income, in every kind of family and community -- have friends who drink, use drugs, cheat, steal, or are sexually active. Peer pressure has an enormous, and often tragic, effect on teenagers. One young man the Commission met called peer pressure "a powerful psychological drug." He should know -- he's serving a 30-year sentence for manslaughter.

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Finally, many parents worry about the effects of popular culture on children. About 40 percent think programs on network television have a negative influence on children -- about half believe the same about television advertising. And just over half worry about the influence of popular music on children and teenagers.

Our surveys are additional evidence that Americans -- whether they are raising children or not -- are deeply concerned about the pressures that limit families' ability to raise children well. They worry that the economic squeeze on middle-class families is getting tighter every day, making it harder for parents to make ends meet, while still giving children the time and attention they need. They fear that poor families have few legitimate routes out of poverty. And they worry that our failure as a society to invest time and resources in children and families will bankrupt the nation -- socially, economically, and politically.

From other surveys, we also know that Americans think government does not care about average families and hasn't a clue about how to address their needs.

Well, the National Commission on Children spent more than two years listening to parents and children -- in their homes, in schools, at town meetings, and through these national surveys. If our leaders want to know what families are worried about -- it's right here in our surveys. If they want to know what to do about it -- we have laid out a comprehensive plan.

In our final report, we called on individuals, the private sector, and government at all levels to invest more time and resources to support and strengthen all families raising children. We drew directly on the two surveys to shape our recommendations.

To increase the economic security of all families raising children, we proposed a comprehensive income security package -- including a $1,000 refundable child tax credit, the Earned Income Tax Credit, child support enforcement and insurance, and community employment opportunities. I will introduce legislation tomorrow based on these recommendations.

We called for family-oriented employment policies to give parents more time with their children. I know, Madame Chairman, that you are leading the fight for family and medical leave, and I will be fighting right beside you.

The Commission stated strongly that children need a mother and a father -- and reminded Americans that marriage and parenthood are responsibilities they should not take lightly. To give families the support they sometimes need in child rearing, we recommend the expansion of community-based family support programs.

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To help adolescents avoid dangerous and destructive behaviors, we said all young people should have access to community-based social services, opportunities for community service, and job training and other programs to explore and prepare for satisfying, productive careers.

To convey strong moral values to children, we called on Americans to renew a commitment to the values of human dignity, character, and citizenship. We urged the media and entertainment industry to exercise greater restraint, and we called on parents to be more vigilant in monitoring and discussing the cultural messages their children receive.

These proposals, and others that we offered, respond to the immediate concerns expressed by so many parents and children. They also call for a critical long-term investment in our nation's future. Our surveys show that we have a solid base of close, loving families to build on. Now it's time to get on with the job.

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Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you very, very much.

Well, Jason, are you ready?

Mr. ZIMBLER. Yes.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, we want to welcome you this morning. For those of you who don't know, Jason Zimbler is a very prominent actor on the Nickelodeon Show, and we welcome you this morning and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF JASON ZIMBLER, NICKELODEON SHOW "CLARISSA EXPLAINS IT ALL," NEW YORK, NY

Mr. ZIMBLER. My name is Jason Zimbler, and I play the part of Ferguson Darling on the Nickelodeon show "Clarissa Explains It All," and I am here with Susan Hayward, from the research firm Yankelovich, Clancy and Shulman; Michael Koegel, Casting Director, and Karen Flischel, Research Vice President from the cable network Nickelodeon.

I'd like to tell you about what it's like to be a kid in the United States today, both from my point of view and from the results of the Nickelodeon-Yankelovich Youth Monitor, a national study of 1200 children aged 6 to 17 that has been conducted nearly every year since 1987.

I guess my basic point today is that most grown-ups don't really know what it is like to be a kid today. We're growing up in a world that's very different from the world you grew up in, and we see things in different ways. Of course, we are still kids, and some things about kids will never change.

Take our families, for instance. They are not like Beaver Cleaver's family—three-fourths of our moms have jobs, and 22 percent of us live with just one parent, usually mom. That doesn't mean you have to feel sorry for us, though. Only one kid in ten comes home from school to an empty house, and they are mostly at least 15 years old. We spend plenty of time with our parents; 78 percent of us usually eat dinner with them, and 90 percent usually get to spend some time with a parent during the evening, even on school nights. And when we have problems, half of us turn to our parents for help; a third of us talk to our friends first.

Even though our parents may not think so, we do listen to what they have to say to us. Between 60 and 90 percent of us know that our parents want us to do well in school, get our homework done, and get into college. They also want us to have good manners, to have friends they approve of, and stay out of trouble. They also want us to stay away from smoking, drinking, drugs and junk food.

Of course, there are some messages we would like to get across to them, too. Half of us would like our parents to wear seat belts, not to drink and drive. About a third of us worry about their health; they should stop smoking and get more exercise.

Being on our own more may not be such a bad thing. Maybe we are learning responsibility and how to make our own decisions earlier than kids used to. We're much more likely to be preparing our own meals at least some of the time, than we were only four years ago. In 1991, one-third of the kids in the survey said they prepared meals and snacks at least some of the time, and most of them used a microwave to do it.

Kids today worry about different things than grownups did when they were young. I've heard kids used to be told to hide under their desks in case someone dropped an atom bomb on the school. We have different problems. The one thing more kids said they worry about is needing to make more money. About two-thirds of us think we probably will never be better off than our parents are now. After the concern about money comes AIDS, drugs, and getting into college. The concerns about money and not getting into college have grown a lot since 1987. In spite of all these worries, however, 93 percent of us say we are at least pretty happy, and 35 are very happy.

We have our ambitions as well. Almost nine out of ten-kids think they will go to college, even though only four out of ten are saving for it, and almost all of us expect to have jobs once we graduate. That's another difference between us and kids in the past, I think.

I've heard that years ago a lot of girls didn't go to college or have jobs, but now we all expect to do these things, boys and girls. Boys still want to be athletes and girls still want to be teachers, but both boys and girls have equal interest in becoming doctors.

Like kids in the past, we do spend a lot of time in school. Most of us, 84 percent, like school at least a little, and we get pretty good grades—28 percent get mostly A's and 50 percent average B's. That's probably because we spend an average of an hour and 15 minutes a day on our homework.

Homework is not the only thing we do after school, though. It's number three on the list as things we usually do, right after watching TV and eating snacks. Other activities a lot of kids get involved in are playing, visiting friends, talking on the phone, and reading. The thing we do a lot more now than a few years ago is playing video games.

Not as many of us watch TV with our parents as a few years ago. Fifty-three percent used to do that, and it's only 43 percent now. Most kids say that they get most of their ideas and information from TV and from their friends. Newspapers help with current events, and radio is where you find out about new music. About half of us have rules about watching TV, though. The biggest number can't watch until their homework is done.

Watching TV and homework aren't the only things kids do with their time. We actually have to work. Most of us have chores around the house, although not quite as many of us are doing them today as in 1987. Most of us have to clean our rooms, but beyond that the boys do outside chores like mowing the lawn and washing the car, and girls do the inside stuff like cooking, cleaning, washing the dishes and laundry.

Besides chores, 20 percent of us have jobs we get paid for. They work an average of ten hours a week and get paid about $40. That's not even minimum wage. More than half get allowances, though—the average is almost $7. This adds up to a lot of money, maybe as much as $33 billion a year. And although half of us have a savings account, we spend most of our money—like everybody else.

I've also read that 7 percent of all corporate philanthropy, $400 million, is spent on kids. This is a trend we hope grows.

That's a snapshot of "kidom" today. It is different than just several years ago, a lot because of things we kids have had nothing to do with. Kids today wonder about serious things like why people, including kids, are homeless in such a rich country, and why teachers are not compensated for such an important role they have in our lives, and why our rivers and oceans are so polluted.

I'd like to close by sharing the kids' Bill of Rights, which was developed by Nickelodeon in 1991.

First, kids have the right to be seen, heard, and respected as a citizen of the world.

Second, kids have the right to a world that is peaceful and an environment that is not spoiled.

Third, kids have the right to be treated with equality, regardless of race, religion, nationality, sex, personality, grades or size.

Fourth, kids have the right to make mistakes without someone making them feel like a jerkhead.

Fifth, kids have the right to be protected from harm, injustice and hatred.

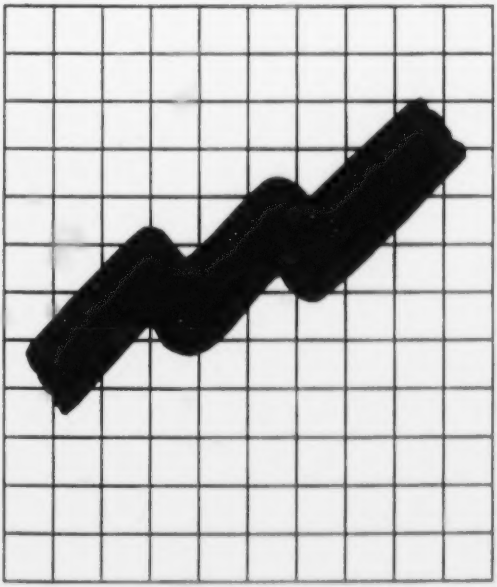
Sixth, kids have the right to an education that prepares them to run the world when it's their turn.

And, seventh, kids have the right to their opinions and feelings, even if others don't agree with them. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Jason Zimbler follows:]

Youth MONITOR™

1991



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PREPARED STATEMENT OF JASON ZIMBLER, NEW YORK, NY

My name is Jason Zimbler and I play the part of Ferguson Darling on the Nickelodeon show "Clarrissa Explains It All". I'd like to tell you about what it's like to be a kid in the United States today, both from my own point of view and from the results of the Nickelodeon/Yankelovich Youth Monitor, a national study of 1200 children aged 6-17 that has been conducted nearly every year since 1987.

I guess my basic point is that most grown ups don't really know what it's like to be a kid today. We're growing up in a world that's very different from the one most of you grew up in, and we see things in different ways. Of course, we're still kids, and some things about kids will never change.

FAMILY

Take our families, for instance. They're not like Beaver Cleaver's family -- 3/4 of our Moms have jobs, and 22% of us live with just one parent, usually Mom. That doesn't mean you have to feel sorry for us, though. Only one kid in ten comes home from school to an empty house, and they are mostly at least 15 years old. And we spend plenty of time with our parents; 78% of us usually eat dinner with them, and 90% usually get to spend some time with a parent during the evening, even on school nights. And when we have problems, half of us turn to our parents for help; a third of us talk to our friends first.

Even though our parents may not think so, we do listen to what they have to say to us. Between 60 and 90% of us know that parents want us to do well in school, get our homework done and get into college. They want

us to have good manners, to have friends they approve of, and to stay out of trouble. They want us to stay away from smoking, drinking, drugs and junk foods.

Of course, there are some messages we'd like to get across to them, too. Half of us would like to get our parents to wear their seat belts, and not to drink and drive. About a third of us worry about their health; they should stop smoking and get more exercise.

Being on our own more may not be such a bad thing. Maybe we are learning responsibility and how to make our decisions earlier than kids used to. We're much more likely to be preparing our own meals at least some of the time than we were only 4 years ago. In 1991, one third of the kids in the survey said they prepared meals and snacks at least some of the time, and most of them used a microwave to do it.

FEARS AND ASPIRATIONS

Kids today worry about different things than grownups did when they were young. I've heard kids used to be told to hide under their desks in case someone dropped an atom bomb on the school! We have different problems: the one thing more kids (51%) said they worry about than any other was "needing to make money." And two-thirds of us think we probably will never be better off than our parents are now. After the concern about making money comes AIDS (48%), drugs (45%) and not getting into college (46%). The concerns about money and not getting into college have grown a lot since 1987, too. In spite of all these worries,

however, 93% of us say we are at least pretty happy, and 35% are very happy.

We have our ambitions as well. Almost 9 out of 10 kids think they will go to college (even though only 4 out of 10 are saving for it), and almost all (97%) of us expect to have jobs once we graduate. That's another difference between us and kids in the past, I think. I've heard that years ago a lot of girls didn't go to college or have jobs -- but now we all expect to do those things, boys and girls. Boys still want to be athletes (12%) and girls want to be teachers (15%), but both boys and girls have equal interest in being doctors.

ACTIVITIES

Like kids in the past, we do spend a lot of time in school. Most of us (84%) like school, at least a little. And we get pretty good grades -- 28% get mostly A's and 50% average B's. That's probably because we spend an average of an hour and 15 minutes a day on our homework.

Homework's not the only thing we do after school though. It's number three on the list (mentioned by 71%) of things we "usually do," right after watching TV (79%) and eating snacks (77%). Other activities a lot of kids get involved in are playing, visiting friends, talking on the phone, and reading. The thing we do a lot more now than a few years ago is playing video games.

Not as many of us watch TV with our parents as a few years ago; 53% of us used to do that, and it's only 43% now. Most kids say that they get most of their ideas and information from TV and from their friends.

(Newspapers help with current events., and radio is where you find out about new music.)

About half of us have rules about watching TV, though. The biggest number (27%) can't watch until their homework is done.

Watching TV and homework aren't the only things kids do with their time. We actually have to work! Most of us (91%) have chores around the house, although not quite as many of us are doing them today as did in 1987. Most of us have to clean our rooms, but beyond that the boys do outside chores (mowing the lawn and washing the car) and girls do the inside stuff (cooking, cleaning, washing the dishes and laundry).

Besides chores, 20% of us have jobs we get paid for. They work an average of 10 hours a week and get paid about $40. That's not even minimum wage! More than half (56%) of us get allowances, though; the average is almost $7. This all adds up to a lot of money, maybe as much as 33 billion dollars a year. And although about half of us have a savings account, we spend most of our money (like everybody else, I guess).

That's a snapshot of "kidom" today. It is different than just several years ago, a lot because of things we kids have had nothing to do with. Kids today wonder about serious things like why people, including kids, are homeless in such a rich country and why teachers aren't compensated better for the really important role they have in our lives and why our rivers and oceans are so polluted.

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- Kids have the right to make mistakes without someone making them feel like a jerkhead.
- Kids have the right to be protected from harm, injustice and hatred.
- Kids have the right to an education that prepares them to run the world when it's their turn.
- Kids have the right to their opinions and feelings, even if others don't agree with them.

Thank you

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, I want to say, you are one dynamic duo, and we ought to put the two of you on the road. I think this dialogue could go a long way to helping America come to some of these terms.

Do you have to leave, Senator Rockefeller, or do you have time for a few questions?

Senator ROCKEFELLER. We've got a vote at 10:30, but it's only 10:27. [Laughter]

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, let me yield to Congressman McEwen. Do you have any questions?

Mr. MCEWEN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Senator, thank you very much, appreciate your being here.

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Thank you.

Mr. MCEWEN. I especially appreciate your references, not only in your report but again this morning, to the importance of moral and religious values to a family. I think it is something that has been long overlooked as the basis from which families grow.

And, secondly, my only question would be—you made reference in the report about the Title 20 program that encouraged abstinence, and recommended increasing from $33 million to $40 million. There has been some hostility to that in the Congress. Do you have any explanation as to why?

Senator ROCKEFELLER. To the encouragement of abstinence?

Mr. MCEWEN. To the program that was recommended in your report to increase funding and, as I understand, last year was zeroed out, in fact.

Senator ROCKEFELLER. By the Congress? Our basic problem, in our report—and, frankly, one of the large controversies that we had, but we worked it out positively—was whether or not a government group—and we were appointed by the President, by the Speaker of the House and the Majority of the Senate—should get into, in fact, values in American families and with American children and, frankly, some of the liberals decided they didn't want to do that.

And I was chairman, and I was determined that we had to do that—that you cannot, one, be credible to the American people, speaking from the government or from the private sector, unless you are addressing the subject of values, and we so did. And we did encourage abstinence, and we did encourage much more restrained use of television. We were critical in a variety of ways, of what is going on in our culture, and we're critical of a variety of things that go on at home, and we didn't mince any words about it. But we felt that was important because it's what is on people's minds. If the rest of our program was going to be credible, then we had to be credible about what people worry about in the innermost parts of their hearts.

Mr. MCEWEN. Senator, I leave off as I began, thank you for doing it.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you. Congressman Peterson.

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator, also I've applauded your efforts for a long time, in working this problem. The numbers you've given us today are incredibly interesting. I look at them somewhat as "cup half-full, cup half-empty."

Can you elaborate a little more on your enthusiasm for what you did give us? How bad is the problem in regard to the demise of the family, and also the actual circumstances that kids exist in now?

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Well, you are right about the cup being half-empty/half-full. Basically, there's a lot of good news in our report that families are making it, that parents, much more than many people think, are doing everything in the world they possibly can to be good parents, whether there are two parents at home or single parents, that they are stretching time. But they are stressed out, they are working harder than they ever did before, yet they are determined to do the right thing by their kids. They are having dinner with their kids as families five nights out of the week, but after this good effort—and there are a lot of really strong families in this country—there is this tremendous worry that families have that they are treading water, that no matter how hard they work their income isn't keeping up, their time with their children is less than what they think that they owe, and they are scared. They are scared for their kids' safety, they are scared for their kids' economic future, they are scared for their own families' economic future.

I mean, when you have as many families—if you have 40 percent of kids worrying about getting shot, on a daily basis, that says a lot.

So, there is good news and there is bad news. The good news we celebrate, the bad news we try to do something about.

Mr. PETERSON. Is it true, as a follow-up there, that the good families are doing pretty good, but then you have this incredible expanse of success in a family and then get down to the families that are doing very bad. I mean, that doesn't seem like there's a straight line in relationships. It seems like there's a break in the statistical data.

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Obviously, income helps enormously, which is why the centerpiece of our whole commission's report is a four-part income security package which lifts the overwhelming majority of all families in poverty, out of poverty, and does it for less, I might say, than some of the tax breaks that are being offered up around this Hill.

I guess my response would be that stress and pressure and a sense of not being able to spend enough time with children and worrying about the future is not income-based. It is to some degree, obviously, in urban areas and poor rural areas, but that stress and concern and fear and lack of government really understanding what's going on out there, is broadly across all income groups.

Yes, there are a lot of secure families, but there are precious few of them except at the very upper-income levels, that aren't substantially worried about their economic future.

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you. Congressman Holloway?

Oh, and, Senator, if you do need to go at anytime, please go, because we totally understand.

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Thank you, Senator, I appreciate you coming and testifying before us. I think we often want to try to stress the fact that we can't go back—you know, the Ozzie and Harriet family is a

thing of the past, there is no hope for that anymore—and I disagree with that theory.

I didn't hear all of your testimony, I apologize for being late, but I'd like to know a little bit of figures, if you have it, pertaining to suicides with children, what type of families do they come from, are they two-working-parent families?

Senator ROCKEFELLER. We have figures, Congressman, that relate to suicide and worry about suicide. We don't have the sociologically gathered figures. If we do, I will get them to you. It was not something we pursued in our poll.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. I would like anything along that line, as far as problems with crime with single parents—you know, where is, really, our problem at? I think we can make a poll to read what we want it to read. We can ask a question—I'm sure from polling data we all know that—no one is going to be against children, that's for sure, and I hope there's no one in America against children—but I have a problem with government's involvement and where do we think the end is. Are we willing to go back?

Everyone is afraid to say that a mother or a father, whichever one we want, home with their children, we're better off. I mean, we're basically afraid to say that "a woman's place is in the home"; I don't agree with that statement. I say that one of the parents place is in the home as much as we can do it, especially through the early years.

And I would like any kind of statistics that show what happens, number one, where there's two parents, where we don't just have a single-parent family; number two, where there are two parents, one of them stay at home with the children, especially birth through six, or whenever they start kindergarten. What type figures do they look like both ways?

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Congressman, I've got 13 minutes left on the vote, so I will try to make this answer short. There was a good deal of discussion about single-parent and two-parent families, and there's no question that the Children's Commission recognizes that it's better for the children and for the family if there are two parents, both in terms of social support, emotional support, financial support, and all the rest of it, but a lot of people in America don't have that choice.

There were some folks, mothers, that used to be part of two-parent families that, after the war in the Persian Gulf, are now single-parent families, and that's not something that they chose to have happen. People get killed, people die, there's illness, marriages split up—one-half of all marriages now end in divorce. So, there are a lot of single-parent families.

And one of the things we were very clear to do in our report was to say whereas two-parent families work the best for everybody concerned, that single-parent families are an absolute and sacred unit of the family in this country, that there are more of them happening, to our regret, but there is no less of an appreciation and respect for what it is that they are going through. In fact, the pressures on those, mostly women, is absolutely stupendous, and how it is that they work all day—and they have no choice if they want to stay off of welfare—and come home and work with their children, is a monumental concept.

So, two parents is best, but that's a luxury that an awful lot of our families don't have in this country, and I cannot diminish somebody who has been left by a spouse or who has been lost in a war overseas.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Well, I agree, and I agree there are many good single parents, I'm not even trying to make that point. I'm saying statistics for us and of government—you know, where do we have a role in trying to move—they say we can't legislate morality, but somewhere, as government, it looks to me like we can encourage it, and I don't think we're doing that today. I think we are more looking at "let's take care of all these given groups"—and I agree that sometimes there are good.

Senator ROCKEFELLER. In our report, Congressman, if you will read the income security section, I think you'll like it. The refundable tax credit was the idea that had the most broad support of any in the entire two-year process, and that together with a minimum assured benefit, earned income tax credit, minimum wage, will take the overwhelming majority of families in poverty in this country, and lift them out of poverty so that you don't have a welfare policy in this country, you have sort of a social insurance program, which works towards getting people out of welfare and into work, and it will work, and the entire program is less than some of the bad ideas that are being tossed around.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Thank you.

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Madam Chair, if you will excuse me?

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Senator, yes. We thank you very much. And I'm sure if any of our colleagues have further questions, you'll be more than happy to have the commission answer them. So, thank you for being here.

Jason, we're not going to let you off the hook quite so easily, right?

Does anybody here have questions for Jason? Mr. Holloway?

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Jason, first of all, thanks for testifying. You're quite a young man, and I think your vocabulary and your reading ability and everything else is something we can all admire in a young man of your age.

First of all, I guess the one thing I'd like to ask you first is in your Bill of Rights for the youth or children of America—I was very surprised to find out that you didn't have—or that Nickelodeon did not put in the right of a child to life, right to be born. I have to say that first.

And the second thing I think that you leave out in that is the right to a stable, loving family that a child should have the right to, and I think that's something I would like to hope that you all will consider in the future and look at it from the right of children.

I'd like to ask you to describe to me a little bit what is your family like, a little bit of your family background, and to know what kind of family—single-parent, whatever kind of family you come from. I know nothing about you.

Mr. ZIMBLER. I have both parents. They——

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Do they both work?

Mr. ZIMBLER. They love each other—yes, they both work.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Good income? You probably have one, if they don't. [Laughter]

Mr. ZIMBLER. I guess so. My Mom didn't work as much a couple of years ago, I remember that. I remember she was at home at 3:00 o'clock, she would pick us up from school, and now she works 'til 6:00. My Dad works really long hours, he works like 16 hours a day.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. If I could ask you one thing, what would be the one thing in life that you would want more than anything else today in your life? What do you feel, as a youth, that you are missing, that's being taken away from you with today's society?

Mr. ZIMBLER. That my parents have to work so much that I don't get to see them as much. To make the same money that they were making before, they have to work like double as much, so they can only be at the house half as much time, so I miss that. And that is what I wish, like if they could be home, doing the same work they do but be home more.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Let me ask you one lead-up and then I'll turn back, because I don't want to hog the program here. What is money to you as a child? Is it more important that they have this big income, that you have everything in life that you could ever dream for, financially, or would you put you and your parents being able to be together ahead of all the money in the world?

Mr. ZIMBLER. Well, I still see them, you know, working a little bit, so somewhere like a medium, between like absolute there all the time and complete like financial—you know——

Mr. HOLLOWAY. So, you'd like both, really.

Mr. ZIMBLER. Well, no, not both, but like if not as much, you know, financially, but not have them there all the time because then, you know, you'd kind of get like sick of them. [Laughter]

Mr. HOLLOWAY. You'd trade out some of the worldly goods then, to have them. Thank you very much.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Your honesty is wonderful, absolutely wonderful.

Did you have a question?

Mr. KLUG. Yes, I do. Jason, I have a three-year-old and a seven-year-old at home, who will, frankly, care less that Senator Rockefeller was here today, but will be absolutely impressed that I got a chance to meet you. So, you know, I know the power of Nickelodeon in my own house.

One thing I want to ask you, which I guess concerns my own kids and concerns a lot of kids I see today, is that you don't have enough time just to be kids and have fun. I mean, do you have the sense that today's children are on too many hockey teams, baseball teams?

Mr. ZIMBLER. Yes. Well, I've been acting for about eight years, so I really don't remember what it's been like to not be acting, so for like my whole life I've been around adults, so I haven't really gotten a chance to be a kid. I mean, like I kind of do in school, but still I've grown up around adults a lot more than my friends have because they are around their friends in school all the time, and I'm always off away from school doing work for Nickelodeon, or for anybody.

And so I don't get to be a kid as much as I would have liked, but it's kind of paid off because I've enjoyed like seeing a lot of new people and meeting new people and seeing different places, and

that's like the plus that's come of this. And I see where like people would—like other kids—have problems because they are sports stars, and they spend their whole life just trying to become something, like become a pro football player or baseball player, and they don't become a kid. So, that's kind of something you miss out on.

Mr. KLUG. Do you think that's part of their parents' fault, or part of society's fault?

Mr. ZIMBLER. Yes. I think if the parents see that a child has a gift, they should only see how much the kid wants to use it and not like overuse it because then it ruins the kid.

Mr. KLUG. Thank you.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Good point. Congressman Peterson, I know, had a question.

Mr. PETERSON. Just a follow-up to that. One of the concerns that I have had, Jason, is that we force all of our children—not just you, and not just you in the entertainment world—to grow up too fast. As a matter of fact, we have children in high school, or in elementary school I should say, dressing like adults and acting like adults.

How do you feel about that? Do we, as a society, force children to grow up too fast in the process?

Mr. ZIMBLER. Yes, I think so. With like TV shows that like see kids like heroes, it sort of makes kids want to be like adults a lot earlier. You don't see like a 16-year-old like playing a board game or something like that, or having fun, because he's trying to be an adult—because he's first learning how to drive and now he thinks he's a big shot and has got to be an adult—but he should still be able to have fun.

Mr. PETERSON. Is it television?

Mr. ZIMBLER. I guess so. I don't think sitcoms—[laughter]—but other shows like violence, violence forces kids to grow up faster because kids in the inner-city, they have to learn how to defend themselves, but why should they, they are kids. They should have adults defending them.

Mr. PETERSON. Okay. Last question then, and I'll stop. Do you think, and do you have any ideas—clearly, one of the things a parent must pass on to a child is the ability to tell right from wrong, to make that decision.

Do you think that we're doing that? Do you think parents are taking that on as a major obligation?

Mr. ZIMBLER. I don't think so because I guess it shows up in the statistics—I think that question is answered in statistics of drunk drivers and drug users because, if the kids knew what was right, they wouldn't succumb to peer pressure as much. Maybe if they knew, they could have a will against it, and then they wouldn't try alcohol and they wouldn't try drugs, and then there wouldn't be drunk drivers, kids as drunk drivers, and 12-year-olds using crack, and it kills them and they are not even adults yet. They haven't had fun.

Mr. PETERSON. Well, I commend you, Jason. I'd like to put you on the road to talk to this subject just alone, but I really do commend you for what you are doing, and I thank you very much.

Mr. ZIMBLER. Thank you.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Anybody else have a question? Congressman Walsh?

Mr. WALSH. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate your holding this hearing, it's something that I know you and I have talked about before.

Jason, thank you for coming. I am enjoying your testimony very much. I have children 15, 12 and 8. I have seen them all grow through Nickelodeon, the eight-year-old is still there, the other two have moved on. Every once in a while I catch my 12 year old watching Nickelodeon, although he wouldn't admit to it.

One of the things that's always kind of bothered me about Nickelodeon and television in general is that it strikes me that in children programming, the adults are buffoons and the kids are, it seems like, almost encouraged to be disrespectful—the Dude Ranch Show, for example.

Mr. ZIMBLER. It happens on our show, too.

Mr. KLUG. Why is that? Do you think that's good for kids?

Mr. ZIMBLER. I think if it's going to be funny, because kids don't get a chance to like make fun of their parents, it isn't something you do every day.

Mr. KLUG. Do you think it teaches kids to be disobedient?

Mr. ZIMBLER. No, because I still think that parents discipline their children well enough so that the kids wouldn't do that, but I think that they enjoy seeing that, and I think that's why it's there. It's not just to make them be more independent and like stand up to their parents because it's out of the norm and it's interesting for them.

Mr. WALSH. Well, you said in your testimony that most kids get most of their ideas and information from television.

Mr. ZIMBLER. Right.

Mr. WALSH. If kids are constantly seeing programs like Married With Children, like the Simpsons, like—whatever the name of the Dude Ranch Show is——

Mr. KLUG. Hey, Dude. [Laughter.]

Mr. WALSH. Hey, Dude, that's it——

[Laughter.]

Mr. KLUG. I told you my kids watch Nickelodeon.

Mr. WALSH. If they see kids on television dealing with adults in a negative way and a lot of these kids are, and they are role models for little kids, what—do you think is the effect on family values?

Mr. ZIMBLER. In some cases, I see it having a completely negative effect, if it's completely overdone—the violence, definitely, in any show has a negative effect, and if the parents are made out to—if there's like no disciplinary control, I mean, that's going too far. For example, on our show, even though the parents are idiots, they still know when we're trying to pull a scam or trying to swindle them. They know, and that shows the kids that—it sort of balances out the negative influence.

Mr. WALSH. One of the things that I think adults say a lot about kids today is that kids want all the rights and none of the responsibilities. How old are you?

Mr. ZIMBLER. Fourteen.

Mr. WALSH. Well, what do you think about kids' rights without responsibility?

Mr. ZIMBLER. It's very true. I don't want to do chores. I don't get an allowance to begin with, but I know if I did, I would want to get the allowance and not do anything.

Mr. WALSH. Good example. How about larger rights and responsibilities, like all this debate about condoms in school. What about the responsibilities of abstinence?

Mr. ZIMBLER. Yes, they are giving out condoms, but what are they used for. I mean, I know, but——

[Laughter.]

Mr. WALSH. I know you know.

Mr. ZIMBLER. But I mean they are not doing enough education, so they give out the condoms and use them, but the kids don't understand.

Mr. WALSH. Do you think adults, teachers, administrators, should be discouraging that sort of activity?

Mr. ZIMBLER. No, I think that definitely should be encouraged because that's encouraging non-disease, but they should also definitely—have highly required course you have a full understanding of how diseases are transmitted. I have like one year of that, and that was two, three years ago, and I don't remember a lot of it.

Mr. WALSH. What about television programs that can be humorous but still stress sexual responsibility, respect to adults and institutions—do you think there's a role for television in that?

Mr. ZIMBLER. I don't think television should be educating children, shows like——

Mr. WALSH. But you said kids are getting all their ideas from television.

Mr. ZIMBLER. It shouldn't be, but they are. I mean, shows like 90210, every week they deal with another issue, but they shouldn't be. That should be dealt with in school.

Mr. WALSH. Alcoholism, sex——

Mr. ZIMBLER. Right. Kids shouldn't have to learn that from TV because then they would learn it the way the characters are.

Mr. WALSH. But that's where they are getting it. I mean, kids are more interested in TV than school.

Mr. ZIMBLER. Right, but if shows like that weren't dealing so much with issues, then kids would pay more attention to the way the issues are presented in school. They would learn the right way, and then some problems would be solved, at least with kids in terms of responsibilities now.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Congressman Bilirakis, did you have a question?

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Madam Chair, I appreciate your indulgence. I'm late because I'm on the Veterans Committee and we had a budget hearing with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Jason, in your Bill of Rights, you refer to having the right to an education that prepares children, kids, to run the world when it is their turn. I suspect you probably know more about the workings of government than an awful lot of adults. I'm not sure how much you do know.

It's very difficult sometimes, for us to realize what our roles should be, you know, how much government should there be in families' lives, in children's lives, in peoples' lives, and that sort of thing, but project yourself, if you can, to a position of king of the

world, or king of the United States, and if you were in that position—you know, you are sitting there—and you heard Senator Rockefeller testify, and you've heard comments and questions from people up here on the panel, and I should think that as a regular human being, and certainly one who is a kid, you might be thinking, "Well, if I had the power to do something, this is what I would do".

Now, in the interest of time, I am not going to ask you to answer that question right here and now, but I just wonder if you could give some thought to it. What would you propose that we do to sort of try to "solve" these problems, or at least try to improve these problems.

If you have a real quick answer, I think maybe the Chair might be interested in hearing it, but it is a complicated question, and I would like to see you maybe submit something like that to us in writing in the record, or something of that nature, because we've got to hear your viewpoint, too—and I commend the Chairwoman for having you on the panel.

Mr. ZIMBLER. I always felt that the way education is now is completely wrong. Kids should not be taught algebra and biology and stuff because are most people here using what they learned about the insides of a frog? [Laughter.]

But kids should be learning, have a choice of decisions of fields that should start as early as junior high school where they learn about the specific field and related topics, instead of about square roots, which is most probably 99 percent of the time not going to be relevant in most adults' lives. The things that will be, like if you're going to be a computer scientist, then you do have to learn math because of formulas and programming, so you learn about programming and computers and running them, but you shouldn't be learning about science and history. Or if you're going to be learning that stuff, then not as much, because that's kind of what makes education boring. And when kids aren't interested in the education, then they could care less about school and whatever they've learned they care less about, and then they would go and do something else that they learned from TV, not what they learned from school. But if it were more interesting, they'd pay more attention and, therefore, actually enjoy school more.

So, if it was something more like what kids wanted to learn in school and not what they are forced to—like course requirements—but what you select, because there are electives, but your whole course should be able to be selected because you should be able to follow up on a field of your choice, and that would make—I think that would solve problems because it would make education more interesting, and kids would learn.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Interesting. Jason, fine, thank you for that, and it is very interesting, a very interesting viewpoint. If you have any further ideas, I would ask that maybe you submit them to the committee, and the Chairwoman could then share that with the rest of us.

Mr. ZIMBLER. Sure.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Congressman Sarpalius?

Mr. SARPALIUS. Jason, I, too, want to commend you for the outstanding job you've done this morning.

Mr. ZIMBLER. Thank you.

Mr. SARPALIUS. I strongly agree with your testimony regarding the influence television has on young people. Crime has increased a great deal in this country. And the two facts are interrelated.

Mr. ZIMBLER. Oh, yes, definitely.

Mr. SARPALIUS. And recent polls have shown the influence of TV to be one of the reasons. The biggest heroes that young people have today are the Ninja Turtles, G.I. Joe, Schwarzenegger, Rambo heroes that deal with crime. Young people like these heroes; the "exciting" adventures they have. Our concern is how can you change the motivation that young people have to watch movies relating to violence and crime.

Mr. ZIMBLER. Well, you know, if you try to say "Let's cut down on movies like Rambo and stuff like that," then somebody's always going to say "But we have freedoms, and you're censoring, and you're taking our freedoms away," so you can't do that. But it's always like a problem if you try to re-educate kids by taking away the things that they are mislearning through television, then they're always going to say "We want it back," you know, if you take away something that a child really likes, he's going to scream for it and then not pay attention to anything else.

So, trying to relearn what a person sees. Unless kids see that it is more make believe—see, they don't see it as make believe, they see it as "Let's go out and do that," let's play with guns and kill each other.

Mr. SARPALIUS. Wouldn't you admire a young person who decided to try to educate young people of the damages those movies can cause, and the influence they have on them down the road of life.

Mr. ZIMBLER. You can't really think of the ideal television show because, if it doesn't have violence, it's going to have love, or sex education that kids are learning the wrong way, and if it doesn't have that it's going to have corruption—something is always going to be wrong with TV, and trying to relearn that is very hard.

I can't speak for other people, but now I see TV and if I see violence, I have the urge to want to do that. I just think that if that camera just panned a little more, you'd just see a light or another camera guy, you know, it's all not real. I know my cousin is four years old, and he grew up on Ninja Turtles, and all he does now is run around the house and go "Cowabunga." When he's learned the wrong way through TV and it's hard to retrain him because that's what he wants to see more of, the Turtles.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Jason, I really thank you. I think you've had some very profound thoughts. This is a tough role. And you may not know, but very rarely does anyone get an audience of congressmen like this. We even had one up here sitting on the floor because we ran out of chairs. That doesn't happen in congressional hearings. So, I think people really wanted to hear what you say, and I think all of us would agree that you communicated some very serious thoughts that we will take into account.

I think your role in television—maybe more and more you can help bridge that gap between what some of us who are older are concerned about and young people, and how we do that.

Thank you for being here, we really appreciate it. Good luck to you.

Mr. ZIMBLER. Thank you.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. We now have a very distinguished panel that's going to come up and talk more about numbers and other details to fill in here, and we want to welcome this morning Donald Hernandez, who is the Chief of the Bureau of the Census, Marriage and Families Statistics Branch of the Populations Division; Thomas Plewes, who is the Associate Commissioner for Employment and Unemployment Statistics at the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Gary Bauer, who is the president of the Family Research Council; Celinda Lake, who is the Vice President of Greenberg-Lake of Washington, D.C., and a very distinguished pollster; and Vince Breglio, who is the President of RSM, Inc., in Lanham, Maryland, and also a very distinguished pollster.

My understanding is that Celinda and Vince have to leave, and so we may turn this around a bit.

Vince, I think while we had you going last, maybe after yesterday in New Hampshire, we'll want you to go first. As the President's pollster, you may have some information that could help us all in this area. We understand that you are under great demands to get in and get out today, the two of you, so let us yield to Vince first, and then Celinda, and then we'll go back to regular order. So, Vince, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF VINCENT J. BREGLIO, PH.D., PRESIDENT, RSM, INC., LANHAM, MD

Mr. BREGLIO. I would have thought being a Republican, a pollster and a political consultant, one of those three titles, would have disqualified me from going first, or at least caused great skepticism among those of you sitting up there regarding what I am about to say.

A good friend of mine on the Senate side, Pete Domenici, commented once "if you torture numbers long enough, you can get them to confess to anything."

Personally, I'm opposed to torturing numbers, but I do work them over pretty hard, and I do it in my attempt to try to find out what the public thinks and feels regarding important issues, and the issue we're dealing with today is among the most important of the issues facing us, both as a nation and as politicians.

I'm going to try and limit my remarks as I have filed testimony and you have that to review, to some key points that I think are important.

First of all, I believe that the family, as an institution, sees itself in better shape than perhaps it gets credit for. Let's start with the recession. In general, the assessment of the economy is evident in every piece of research that I do. It is overwhelmingly negative and tends to color any subsequent questions on issues or policy matters that are asked. On the other hand, when families and individual voters are asked to assess their personal economic situation, they

find it substantially less negative than their assessment of the economic plight of the nation as a whole.

A number of people say the recession has had a big effect on their family. That number hasn't changed significantly, or even markedly, over the last two years, despite the deepening severity of the recession. Nor do more people say their own family's financial situation is now in poor shape. Only about one-quarter of the voters say the recession has had a big effect on them or their families. This, however, masks a considerable difference among voters who are more or less affluent. Attitudes on this issue correlate directly with income. For example, 42 percent of lower income households say the recession has had a big effect on them. This number is only 17 percent among upper income households. There are other aspects such as savings and spending; I won't go into those. You can read my prepared testimony on those topics.

At a personal level, as we've already heard this morning, families tend to assess their general attitude and status on a pretty favorable basis, but there are some issues which are of great concern to families and I want to dwell on those. Those issues, at least the ones we are able to measure with some degree of accuracy in polling, have an economic side to them, and that shows up, in particular, in the concern over the family budget.

When shown a list of items for which families must budget and asked which ones concern them most, half of the worries focus on items related to health care. Items such as paying for long-term health care expenses for an elderly family member, the expenses of a major illness or injury, or even the day-to-day health care expenses such as a doctor's bill create a high level of family budget anxiety. Another budget issue that families are considerably concerned about is saving for and paying for college.

These two issues, health care and education, generate a powerful influence over the budget decisions of the average family. But something else has occurred around these two particular issues—each has become a legitimate cutting issue at the ballot box and, hence, an important political issue. Voters care about family issues in a big way, but not all family issues make a difference when people cast a ballot. I'm going to focus on these two issues.

Let's start with health care. If you look at the numbers, it's not hard to see that the political and media rhetoric has perhaps outrun the feeling of the voters in regard to health care. Although you probably would not conclude this by listening to the debate in the last six months, families are generally satisfied with the health care they are receiving. More than seven out of ten express satisfaction when asked directly about their health care and the health care their family receives. This number has remained quite consistent over the last several years.

The rub, to no one's surprise, is the cost of health care. More than six out of ten families are not satisfied with the price they must pay for good health. More than half the voters mention the cost of health care when asked to choose the most important health issue.

Americans divide the blame for high health care costs among many people and institutions. Insurance companies shoulder the largest share of the blame, but that represents only about a quar-

ter of the finger pointing. Doctors are blamed by one out of five Americans, hospitals and lawyers share about 15 percent each, and the Federal Government is blamed by about one person in ten.

Roughly one voter in three mentions the lack of health insurance as the most important health problem facing the United States right now. Health care insurance cleanly divides family populations into those who are covered by their employer and those who are not. That proportion is roughly 70 percent covered versus 30 percent who are not covered by employer-provided health insurance.

Among those who are covered, 71 percent say they are "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with their present coverage. The most significant change that has occurred among those who are covered with employer-supplied health coverage, is that sometime in the last two years their employer has cut back on health benefits, or made them personally, pay a larger percentage of their health insurance costs. This has ratcheted up anxiety over cost and a family's ability to pay for certain kinds of care. Now, those who are not covered by health insurance are more critical of health care in general. Still, a majority express overall satisfaction with the health care that their families receive.

In regard to making health insurance available, two out of three family members believe that employers should be required, regardless of size, to provide their employees with health insurance. Three out of ten oppose such a requirement.

When I run surveys for political candidates, I add a phrase to this question that goes something like this—"employers should be required to provide health insurance for their employees even if it costs the community jobs."—With that phrase added, the percentage of support drops substantially, but still a majority support putting the requirement on the backs of employers.

The data on what changes the voters would approve of to keep health care costs down, are somewhat confusing and not terribly helpful. The clearest read is that families believe everyone should pay some share of their medical costs, such as doctor visits, medicine and hospital stays. That, they believe, would serve as an incentive to use the system less and hold costs down. Further, they are opposed to anything that might limit the kind of health care available to individuals, such as tests, procedures and various health care options paid for by insurance and government programs. Those two are fairly constant. Everything else varies, depending on how the question is asked and the population responding.

The future of our health care system is cloudy in the minds of a vast majority of family members who respond to surveys. What they know is that the costs are too high and they are concerned about the availability of health insurance. They want change, that's clear, but the form they would like the system to take remains murky.

When you offer them some structure such as the "pay or play" plan offered by Senator Kennedy, a national health care plan that covers all Americans, or leaving the present system alone, no single plan comes out a clear winner.

Four out of ten voters say they would support a national health care plan paid for by taxpayers. Interestingly, in the 1970s when

this debate was joined, roughly one voter out of three was consistently in support of a national health care system. The numbers haven't changed greatly over two decades.

The Kennedy approach requiring employers to either provide coverage for their employees or pay into a federal fund that would cover uninsured citizens, is supported by three out of ten Americans. This is a relatively new entry and draws quite well across the political spectrum.

One person in five supports leaving the system alone.

I have done one study recently that included the Bush option in New Mexico. In that particular survey, the Bush plan is preferred by a small percentage over pay-or-play or national health insurance. However, none of the three suggested options—play-or-pay, national health insurance, or the Bush plan—enjoy a particular advantage at this time.

What I say, folks, is let the debate begin. The voters are out there ready, willing and interested, but they are very confused about the murky situation in health care.

What about education? Concern about education has grown substantially among voters since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. These concerns are amplified by reports that show American children are not doing well. In fact, just recently a report was released that showed nine and thirteen-year-olds in the United States scored lower in math and science—in some cases, far lower—than their peers in at least a dozen other countries.

But there is a twist here. While Americans are concerned about our nation's schools, they still give good grades to their local schools. It's a bit how they feel about you in Congress—many of them have given up on the institution, but they still like their own local member of the House or Senate. Well, that was true in the past. I'm not sure what it will be like in 1992.

Further, there is what Lou Harris called a "reality gap," and I think this is very important. In a poll done by Harris last fall, he compared the attitudes of the business community, educators, parents and students, on how well the schools are doing to prepare today's students for jobs and college.

Assessing fifteen key objectives of elementary and secondary education, employers find our students poorly prepared to enter the workforce. Only about 30 percent of business persons rank the overall preparedness of recent students favorable to holding down a job; two out of three business persons are unfavorably impressed with their abilities. Contrast that to seven out of ten students who thought the schools were doing well in preparing them against those same fifteen objectives—a perception shared by more than six out of ten, (65 percent) of their parents.

Higher educators are only a little kinder toward today's students in terms of preparation for college. Thirty-six percent (36%) give students an overall positive rating, while 62 percent give them low marks in preparation for study at the college level. Yet, seven out of ten students who went on to college felt they were well prepared, and 77 percent of their parents felt the same. Same schools, different perceptions.

It is difficult to generate a political issue focusing on performance with this wide gap in perception. One potential solution to

closing this "reality gap" can be gleaned by some of the Harris polling work and the qualitative research that I have personally conducted that focuses on accountability.

Harris found that more than eight in ten parents support the creation of national standards. If the standards are made clear, all these disparate groups will know whether the schools and the students are meeting them or not.

My own work, done last fall for the New Standards Project, found considerable support for setting high national standards for educational performance. These important findings are based on ten separate focus groups in five cities across the United States.

Among the conclusions which I found are: There should be one set of national standards for the country, not regional or state standards; the national standards set for our children should be set as high as the standards for other countries such as Japan and Germany, however—and this is a consistent caveat by all parents—the standards should be uniquely American. No one is ready to adopt those of Japan, for example. And, lastly, parents are identified most often as the appropriate ones to help set the standards. For a majority of participants in these groups, becoming involved with setting standards is viewed as one way of increasing parental involvement in the education of children. Parents believe many other people should also be involved, such as educators and business people.

Parental involvement is important to Americans. Many feel the quality of education is not the responsibility of government or even educators, but rather the responsibility of parents of school-age children. And I present some data on that in my written testimony.

As in health care, Americans know that there is a problem in education, but don't necessarily have the solution. For example, when asked for one suggestion to improve education, one of five voters suggested better teachers and administrators. Nearly as many say that parents need to be more concerned and involved, which parallels other findings that parents are ultimately responsible for the education of their children. Dollars are also on the parents' agenda, with roughly 16 percent who called for more government funding or higher teacher salaries.

When you look at the six goals adopted by President Bush and the governors two years ago, goals for education to be achieved by the year 2000, three of them are perceived as clearly attainable by parents.

First, our students will demonstrate competency in challenging subject matter, including English, math, science, history and geography. These are the attainable national standards we talked about earlier. That is believed as attainable by over 70 percent of Americans.

Secondly, all our children will start school ready to learn. Sixty-four percent of Americans believe that.

And, thirdly, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent. Fifty-seven percent of Americans believe that.

Less than a majority believe the remaining three goals are attainable.

I started by saying both of these family issues, health care and education, are politically ripe; that they are issues that can make

an important and significant difference in an election. But in the case of both issues, voters are not often presented with clear solutions. The electorate is ready. Policymakers have not yet proposed anything that has taken deep root. Thank you very much.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you very much.

[Prepared statement of Vincent J. Breglio, Ph.D. follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF VINCENT J. BREGLIO, PH.D., PRESIDENT, RSM, INC., LANHAM, MD

Good morning. Thank you for inviting me here today.

My name is Vince Breglio. I am a Republican, a pollster and a political consultant. At least one of those titles probably provides you with some degree of skepticism, and I welcome it. After all, as Senator Pete Domenici has said, "If you torture numbers long enough you can get them to confess to anything."

Personally, I am opposed to torturing numbers. I do, however, work them over very hard to understand what the public thinks and feels. I have to. My clients demand it.

You have asked me to talk about the state of the American family. It is an institution that sees itself in better shape, perhaps, than it gets credit for. But, that said, families also have some serious doubts about the future.

Let me start briefly with the recession. The general public's assessment of the economy is evident in every piece of research I do. That assessment is overwhelmingly negative and tends to color subsequent questions on issues and policies. On the other hand, the view families have of their personal economic situation is not nearly as negative as their assessment of the economic plight of the nation as a whole.

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The number of people who say the recession has had a big effect on their family has not changed markedly over the last two years (see Table 1), despite the severity of the recession. Nor do more people say their own family's financial situation is now in poor shape (see Table 2). About one-quarter of voters say the recession has had a big effect on them or their families. This, however, masks a considerable difference among voters who are more or less well off. Attitudes on this issue naturally correlate very directly with income levels. For example 42% of lower income households say the recession has had a big effect on them. But only 17% of upper income households make the same claim. Another way to say this simply is that the recession has not been evenly felt.

One significant impact the recession has had on families is that fewer of those who are inclined to save and invest are able to do so. Nearly a year ago, in March of 1991, nearly three out ten voters (28%) reported that they had cut down on their savings and investments. Today, this is up to four out of ten voters (40%). (See Table 3.)

Similarly, the number of families who have cut down on purchases and other spending has increased. Last March, 49% of families reported they were cutting down on spending. Today, that number is 56% (see Table 3).

At a personal level, poll respondents report general satisfaction with family life today and demonstrate a sharp reluctance to express their dissatisfaction, if indeed they feel it. Less than one in ten (6%) voice clearly negative feelings about their family situation (see Table 4). At the same time, two of three say they are extremely or very satisfied with their own family life. Married couples also claim to be comfortable with their relationships. More than six in ten (63%) say they are very happy with their marriage (see Table 5).

But the major family issues, at least those evident in polling, have an economic side that shows up in concern over the family budget. When shown a list of items for which families must budget and asked which ones concern them most, half of the worries focus on items related to health care cost (see Table 6). Items such as paying for long-term health care expenses for an elderly family member, the expenses of a major illness or injury, or even the day-to-day health care expenses such as doctor's bills create a high level of family budget anxiety. Another budget issue that families are considerably concerned about is saving for and paying for college.

These two issues -- health care and education -- generate a powerful influence over the personal budget decisions of the average family. But something else has occurred around these

issues. Each has become a legitimate cutting issue at the ballot box. Voters care about these issues in a big way. They make a difference in elections. Although there are many issues that fall into the "family" category, most fail to move votes on election day. I would like to focus my testimony on these two that do.

There is little doubt, for example, that Senator Harris Wofford won his seat last fall in part because he persuaded the voters of Pennsylvania that he had strong positions on health care. And, at the same time, his better-known opponent did not address the issue until it was too late.

Or, for another example, in the last Illinois governor's race, Jim Edgar announced early that a tax increase specially earmarked for education would be one of the cornerstones of his campaign. That was an important reason for supporting Edgar as his opponent first opposed this education tax, then was silent.

Let me start with the health care issue.

If you look at the numbers, it is not hard to see that the "political and media rhetoric" has perhaps outrun the voters. Although you would not think this by listening to the debate the past six months, families are generally satisfied with the health care they are receiving. More than seven out ten (73%) express

such satisfaction when asked directly about their overall satisfaction with the health care their family receives (see Table 7 & 8). This number has remained constant over the last several years.

The rub, to no one's surprise, is the cost of health care. More than six out of ten (62%) families are not satisfied with the price they perceive they must pay for good health (see Table 9). More than half of voters mention the cost of health care when asked to choose the most important health issue. Roughly one voter in three (32%) mentions the lack of health insurance as the most important health issue facing the United States right now (see Table 10).

Americans divide the blame for high health care costs among many. Insurance companies shoulder the largest share of blame, but that represents only about one-quarter of the finger pointing (25%-28%). Doctors are blamed by one out of five Americans (19%). Hospitals and lawyers share about 15% each. And the federal government is blamed by roughly one person in ten (8%-10%) as the cause for the high costs of health care (see Table 11).

Health care insurance cleanly divides family populations into those who are covered by their employer and those who are not.

Among these 70% or so who are covered, seven out of ten (71%) say they are "very" or "somewhat satisfied" with their present arrangement (see Table 12). The most significant change that has taken place among this group is that some time in the last two years, their employer has cut back on health benefits or made them personally pay a larger percentage of their health insurance costs (see Table 13). This has ratcheted up the anxiety over cost and a family's ability to pay for certain kinds of care (see Tables 14, 15, 16, 17). Of special concern is the ability to pay for a long-term illness, particularly one that would affect the ability to work.

Those who are not covered by health insurance are more critical of health care in general. Still, a majority express satisfaction with the health care available to their families.

In regard to making health insurance available, two out of three family members believe that employers should be required -- regardless of size -- to provide their employees with health insurance (see Table 18). Three out of ten oppose such a requirement. When I run political surveys for candidates, I add a phrase to this question that goes something like this "required to provide health insurance for their employees even if it costs the

community jobs." With that phrase, the percentage of support drops, but a majority still support putting this requirement on employers.

The data on what the voters approve of to keep health care costs down, are somewhat confusing and not terribly helpful. The clearest read is that families believe that everyone should pay some share of their medical costs, such as doctor visits, medicine and hospital stays. That, they believe, would serve as an incentive to use the system less and thus hold costs down. This view is held by seven out of ten (71%) voters. And, further, they generally oppose limiting the types of tests, procedures and health care paid for by insurance and government programs (see Tables 19, 20).

The future of our health care system is cloudy in the minds of a vast majority of family members. What they know is that the costs are too high and they are concerned about the availability of health insurance. They want change. But the form they would like the system to take remains murky.

When you offer them some structure, such as the "pay or play" plan offered by Senator Edward Kennedy, or a national health care plan that covers all Americans or leaving the present system alone, no single plan comes out a clear winner.

Four out of ten voters say they would support a national health care plan paid for by taxpayers (see Table 21). Interestingly, in the 1970's, when there were similar discussions on national health care, consistent support for a national health system came from approximately one out of three voters. The number of consistent supporters for a national system hasn't changed much in two decades.

The Kennedy approach -- requiring employers to either provide coverage for their employees or pay into a federal fund that would cover uninsured citizens -- is supported by three of ten (31%) Americans. As a health care strategy, this is a relatively new entry and draws most from across the political spectrum.

Only one person in five (19%) supports leaving the system alone.

I have done one study that included the Bush option; a statewide poll in New Mexico that came out of field last weekend. New Mexico has a clear Democratic advantage in voter registration and 28% Hispanic voters. The Bush plan is the preferred option by a small amount against "play or pay" and national health insurance. None of the three suggested options enjoys a particular advantage at this time.

Let the debate begin.

Concern about education has grown among voters since the publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983. These concerns are amplified by regular reports by the government and others about how poorly American children are doing, particularly when what they are doing is compared to the workplace needs of the 21st Century. For example, just a few days ago, a new report announced that nine and thirteen-year-olds in the United States scored lower (in some cases far lower) than their peers in at least a dozen other countries on math and science.

But there still is a twist here. While Americans are concerned about our nation's schools, they still give good grades to their local schools. It is a bit like how they feel about Congress. Many of them have given up on the institution, but they still liked their own local member of the House or Senate -- at least until this year.

Further, there is what Louis Harris has called a "reality gap." In a poll last fall, Harris compared the attitudes of the business community, educators, parents and students about how well the schools are doing to prepare today's students for jobs and college.

Assessing fifteen key objectives of elementary and secondary education, employers find our students poorly prepared to enter the workforce. Only about 30% of business persons rank the overall

preparedness of recent students favorable to holding down a job; two out of three business persons (66%) are unfavorably impressed (see Table 22). Contrast that to about seven in ten students who thought the schools were doing well in preparing them as assessed against these same objectives -- a perception shared by more than six out of ten (65%) parents.

Higher educators are only a little kinder toward today's students than employers. Thirty-six percent (36%) gave students an overall positive rating while 62% gave them low marks in preparation for study at the college level. Yet, seven out of ten (70%) students who went on to higher education and 77% of their parents, feel their high school preparation was just fine.

Same schools, different perceptions.

It is more difficult to generate a political issue focusing on performance with this variance in perception. One potential solution to closing this "reality gap" can be gleaned by some of Harris' polling work and the considerable qualitative research that I have personally conducted.

Harris found that more than eight in ten parents support the creation of national standards (see Table 24). If the standards are made clear, all these disparate groups will know whether the

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schools and students are meeting them or not. My own work, done last fall for the "New Standards Project,"* found considerable support for setting high national standards of educational performance. These important findings are based on ten separate focus groups in five cities across the United States. Among the conclusions on which I found consensus or near consensus were:

- There should be one set of national standards for the country, not regional or state standards;

- The national standards set for our children should be set as high as the standards in other countries, such as Japan and Germany. The consistent caveat is that the standards should be uniquely American. No one is ready to adopt those of Japan, for example.

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*The New Standards Project is a partnership of the National Center on Education and the Economy and the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh, along with 17 states and six urban school districts. Its aim is to set national standards in core subjects to world-class levels that ALL children would be expected to reach and to design a performance-oriented national examination system to measure achievement.

- Parents are identified most often as the appropriate standard setters. For a majority of participants in these group discussions, becoming involved with setting standards is viewed as one way of increasing parental involvement in the education of their children. Parents believe many other people should be involved in setting national standards as well; particularly educators and business people.

Parental involvement is important to Americans. Many feel the quality of education is not the responsibility of the government or even educators, but rather the responsibility of parents of school-age children (see Table 25).

This is the main finding of a recent national survey conducted by the Wirthlin Group. When asked to indicate who they feel is most responsible for improving the education system in the United States, nearly half (47%) say parents. Only one in five (20%) say that educators are the most responsible. Even fewer (14%) look to their state government or to you in the federal government for improvement.

Not surprisingly, those who are seen as the most responsible are also viewed to be the most effective. Nearly half (46%) of parents believe they would be the most effective in improving the system, although the voice of parents is not one that is heard very much in the debate over educational reform. Clearly, in the minds of most parents, education begins in the home and requires support from concerned parents.

As in health care, Americans know that there is a problem in education but don't necessarily have the solution. For example, when asked for one suggestion to improve education, one of five voters (18%) suggested better teachers and administrators (see Table 26). Nearly as many (16%) say that parents need to be more concerned and involved, which parallels other findings that parents are ultimately responsible for the education of their children. Dollars are also on the agenda for 16%; 9% called for more government funding and 7% suggested higher teacher salaries.

Of the six national education goals adopted by President Bush and the governors two years ago, only three are viewed by a majority as attainable by the year 2000 (see Table 27). They are:

* Our students will demonstrate competency in challenging subject matter including English, math, science, history and geography. Seventy-percent (70%) of Americans believe this goal is attainable, which surprises many educators who believe this is one of the least attainable goals.

* All our children will start school ready to learn -- 64%.

* The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90% -- 57%.

Less than a majority believe the remaining three goals to be attainable:

* Our students will be the first in the world in math and science achievement -- 41%.
* Every adult will be literate -- 37%.
* Every school will be free of drugs and violence -- 18%.

I started by saying both of these "family" issues -- health care and education -- are politically ripe; that they are issues that can make a significant difference in an election. But, in the case of both issues, voters are not often presented with clear solutions. The electorate is ready. Policy makers have not yet proposed anything that has taken deep root.

TABLE 1

Has the recession directly affected you and your family or have you not been affected by it? (IF "AFFECTED," ASK:) Would you say it has had a big or a small effect on you and your family?

	Registered Voters		
	1/92	12/91	9/91
Yes, Affected			
Big Effect	27	26	26
Small Effect	34	33	32
Not Sure	1	1	2
No, Not Affected	38	40	39
Not Sure If Affected	--	--	1

*All Adults

Source: Surveys by NBC News/Wall Street Journal.

TABLE 2

Generally speaking, would you rate your own family's financial situation as in good shape, only fair shape, or poor shape?

	Registered Voters			
	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
1/13-16/90	37%	51%	12%	0%
3/15-19/91	43	45	12	0
5/10-14/91	40	47	12	1
7/26-29/91	36	50	13	1
9/20-24/91	35	49	15	1
10/25-29/91	32	53	15	0
12/6-9/91	35	51	13	1
1/17-21/92	31	53	15	1

Source: Surveys by NBC News/Wall Street Journal

TABLE 3

Changes in Personal Financial Conduct Over the Past Year

Thinking about your personal financial situation in the past year, have you found it to be a period in which you have been cutting down (on purchases and other spending) (on savings and other investments), have you been increasing your (purchases and other spending) (savings and other investments) during the year or has there been little change over the past year?

	Registered Voter	
	1/92	3/91
On Purchases & Other Spending		
Cutting Down	56%	49%
Increasing	9	11
Little Change	34	40
Not Sure/Refused	1	--
On Savings & Other Investments		
Cutting Down	40	28
Increasing	20	25
Little Change	40	47
Not Sure/Refused	--	--

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll, January 1992 and March 1991.

TABLE 4

Thinking about your own family life, would you say you are extremely satisfied, very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied or not at all satisfied with your family life? If you aren't sure, please say so.

	Registered Voters
Extremely Satisfied	24%
Very Satisfied	43
Somewhat Satisfied	24
Not Too Satisfied	4
Not At All Satisfied	2
Don't Know	3

Source: Family Values Survey, September 1991.

TABLE 5

Taking things all together, how would you describe your marriage? Would you say that your marriage is very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?

	National Adult
Very Happy	63%
Pretty Happy	34
Not Too Happy	3
Don't Know	*

*Less than .5%

Source: National Opinion Research Center, September 1991.

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TABLE 6

Which one of the items listed on this card to you most worry about being able to afford....

	National Adult
Housing	17%
Day-To-Day Health Care Expenses	8
Health Care Expenses For a Major Illness or Injury	28
Long-term Care Expenses for an Elderly Family Member	14
Retirement	14
College Education	12
None (Volunteered)	5
Don't Know	2

Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates for Times Mirror, September 19, 1990.

TABLE 7

In general, how satisfied are you with the health care your family receives -- very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, or not satisfied at all?

	Registered Voters
Very Satisfied	33%
Somewhat Satisfied	40
Not Very Satisfied	14
Not Satisfied At All	12
Not Sure	1

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, December 1991.

TABLE 8

On the whole, are you satisfied or not satisfied with the quality of health care available to you and your family?

	National Adult
Satisfied	78%
Not Satisfied	20
Don't Know/No Answer	3

Source: CBS News/New York Times, August 1991.

TABLE 9

On the whole, are you satisfied or not satisfied with the cost of health care available to you and your family?

	National Adults
Satisfied	34%
Not Satisfied	62
Don't Know/No Answer	4

Source: CBS News/New York Times, August 1991.

TABLE 10

Which ONE of the following FOUR health care issues do you think is the most important health care issue facing the country at the present time?

	Registered Voters
The Quality of Health Care	4%
People Not Covered by Any Insurance	32
High Cost of Health Care	55
Hard-To-Get Access to High Quality Health Care	5
All (Volunteered)	3
None (Volunteered)	--
Don't Know	1
Refused/NA	--

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, June 1991.

TABLE 11

Which one of the following six groups do you think is most responsible for the high cost of health care?
(READ LIST, ROTATE, ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

	Registered Voters	
	12/91	6/91
Doctors	19%	21%
Hospitals	15	12
The Federal Government	8	10
Patients	2	2
Lawyers	14	16
Health Insurance Companies	25	28
All Equally (Volunteered)	13	7
None of These (Volunteered)	1	*
Not Sure	3	3

Source: Surveys by NBC News/Wall Street Journal.

TABLE 12

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your health insurance coverage? Are you very or somewhat satisfied/dissatisfied?

	National Adult
Sub-Population: Covered by Health Insurance	
Very Satisfied	49%
Somewhat Satisfied	32
Somewhat Dissatisfied	9
Very Dissatisfied	8
No Opinion	2

Source: Gallup Organization, August 1991.

TABLE 13

If you work, in the last two years, has your employer cut back on health benefits or made you pay a greater percentage of health insurance costs?

Sub-Population: Covered by Health Insurance	National Adult
Yes	34%
No	37
Don't Work (Volunteered)	20
No Health Benefits Through Employer (Volunteered)	4
Self-Employed/Employer (Vol.)	3
Don't Know/No Opinion	1

Source: ABC News/Washington Post, January 1992.

TABLE 14

Generally, how confident are you that you have enough money or health insurance to pay for...usual medical costs?

	National Adult
Very Confident	44%
Somewhat Confident	33
Not Very Confident	13
Not At All Confident	9
Unsure	2

Source: Gallup Organization for American Medical Association, April 1990.

TABLE 15

Generally, how confident are you that you have enough money or health insurance to pay for...a major illness?

	National Adult
Very Confident	34%
Somewhat Confident	32
Not Very Confident	16
Not At All Confident	15
Unsure	3

Source: Gallup Organization for American Medical Association, April 1990.

TABLE 16

Generally, how confident are you that you have enough money or health insurance to pay for...long-term care if you became unable to take care of yourself?

	National Adult
Very Confident	21%
Somewhat Confident	26
Not Very Confident	24
Not At All Confident	24
Unsure	7

Source: Gallup Organization for American Medical Association, April 1990.

TABLE 17

Generally, how confident are you that you have enough money or health insurance to pay for....long-term nursing home or in-home care...Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident or not at all confident? (ROTATED)

	National Adult
Very Confident	10%
Somewhat Confident	27
Not Too Confident	29
Not At All Confident	30
No Opinion	4

Source: Gallup Organization, August 1991.

TABLE 18

Do you think all employers, regardless of size, should or should not be required to provide health insurance for their employees?

	Registered Voters	
	12/91	6/91
Should Be Required	67%	68%
Should Not Be Required	29	30
Not Sure	4	3

Source: Surveys by NBC News/Wall Street Journal.

TABLE 19

Require everyone to pay SOME SHARE of their medical costs such as doctor's visits, prescriptions, and hospital stays as an incentive for people to use the health care system LESS and thereby hold costs down.

	Registered Voters
Favor	71%
Oppose	25
Don't Know	4
Refused/NA	*

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, June 1991.

TABLE 20

As a way to hold down health care costs, LIMIT the types of tests, procedures and health care that are available under insurance and other government programs.

	Registered Voters
Favor	42%
Oppose	52
Don't Know	6
Refused/NA	*

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, June 1991.

TABLE 21

Which one of the following three choices would you favor most as a way to improve the health care system in the United States?
(READ CHOICES, ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

	Registered Voters
A) A health care plan in which businesses must either provide coverage for all their employees or pay into a federal fund that would cover all uninsured Americans	31%
B) A national health care plan covering all people that is administered by the federal government, instead of private insurance companies, and is financed by taxpayers instead of health insurance premiums	41
OR	
C) Leaving the present system alone	19
All Equally (Volunteered)	2
None of These (Volunteered)	3
Not Sure	4

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, December 1991.

TABLE 22

How Well Prepared are Recent High School Graduates to Meet Needs on the Job?
(Sampled Objectives)

	Employers		Educators		Parents		Students	
	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.
Being able to work cooperatively with fellow employees	57%	41%	66%	31%	77%	21%	79%	21%
Learning how to dress and to behave well	39	58	55	42	68	29	70	28
Having a good attitude toward supervisors	39	58	63	35	68	25	76	24
Their ability to read and understand written and verbal instructions	33	64	41	58	70	27	86	14
Having the capacity to concentrate on the work done over an extended period of time	30	66	25	74	65	35	59	40
Learning how to read well	30	67	33	66	67	30	80	19
Being motivated to give all they have to the job they are doing	25	71	29	70	69	30	62	38
Being capable of doing arithmetic functions	25	72	32	65	66	33	74	26
Learning math well	22	74	27	69	65	35	70	30
Having a real sense of dedication to work	20	78	26	73	67	33	66	34
Having real discipline in their work habits	19	78	21	77	54	43	60	39
Learning how to write well	12	84	18	80	56	42	71	29
Learning how to solve complex problems	10	86	15	83	48	52	63	37

Source: Harris Survey, Fall 1991.

TABLE 23

Extent to Which Parents/Students Feel
High School Properly Prepared Them
for Job Market

	Parents	Students
High School Properly Prepared	52%	53%
Should Have Been Better Prepared	46	46
Not Sure/Refused	2	1

Source: Harris Survey, Fall 1991.

TABLE 24

Do you feel that the country needs common national standards of performance that all schools should be expected to live up to, or don't you feel that is necessary?

	Parents	Employers
Need common national standards of performance	87%	81%
Don't need such common standards	13	16
Not Sure/Refused	*	3

Source: Harris Survey, Fall 1991.

TABLE 25

Improving the Education System in the U.S.

	National Adult	
	Who is Most Responsible	Who Will Be Most Effective
Parents	47%	46%
Educators	20	22
State Government	14	13
Federal Government	14	12
Corporations	2	3

Source: The Wirthlin Group, Winter 1992.

TABLE 26

If you could name just one thing, what do you believe would do most to improve the quality of education in the U.S.?

	National Adult
Better, more qualified teachers and administrators	18%
More parental concern and involvement	16%
More government funding	9%
Higher salaries for teachers, merit pay	7%
More commitment and dedication on the part of students	6%
Tougher curriculum, more homework	5%
Reduce/control drugs and violence in the schools	5%

Source: The Wirthlin Group, Winter 1992.

TABLE 27

The President's Goals: How Realistic are They?
(Percent Responding "Very" or "Somewhat" Realistic and Attainable)

	National Adult
By the Year 2000	
American students will demonstrate competency in challenging subject matter including English, Math, Science, History and Geography	70%
All children in America will start school ready to learn	64%
The High School graduation rate will increase to at least 90%	57%
U.S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement	41%
Every adult American will be literate	37%
Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence	18%

Source: The Wirthlin Group, Winter 1992.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Celinda, we welcome you this morning, and we will put your statement in the record, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF CELINDA LAKE, VICE PRESIDENT, GREENBERG-LAKE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. LAKE. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and members of the committee.

What I want to share with you is some polling we have done nationwide for a number of clients, including Kids Count, and I think you'll hear about that poll in more detail from a witness on the next panel, and the Coalition for America's Children, and public polls as well. And across these polls and across these time series, we find that people think it's tough times for American families, tough times to be a parent, tough times to be a kid and, in Americans' eyes, not likely to get much better soon.

America's families are hanging on, but Americans who traditionally are the optimists find their faith shaken in some fundamental ways about the future for families. American families feel satisfied at this very moment with their family life, but they feel on the edge.

Americans overall believe that the American family is worse off than it was ten years ago, 49 percent; only 39 percent believe the American family is better off. More important, voters split about the future direction of the American family in the next ten years, and split about whether that situation will be better or worse, a fundamental violation, really, of how Americans approach everything. Americans think, for example, the drug crisis will be better—absolutely no reason to believe that, but the American public believes that will get better. There are only a few areas where they have such a profound level of doubt, and family is one of them.

The American dream is to offer your children more than you had. You put up with everything in this lifetime so your children can do better, and you hope that your children ultimately respect you for it. In this decade, for the first time, the majority of Americans, 62 percent, worry about whether they will be able to offer their children the same advantages that they had when they were growing up, and Jason has shared with us data that suggests that the kids are worried about the same thing that their parents are worried about.

Concern about the future and the basics affects families across the economic spectrum. Today, 88 percent of Americans believe that they are part of the middle class, but they believe the middle class is fast disappearing, leaving only the rich and the poor. Middle class and working families worry that even if they can hold on, their children may slip into poverty.

Immediate financial security and long-term economic decline are fundamental concerns facing America's families. Americans have faced a decade of stagnant incomes and 80 percent of Americans have seen their real incomes decline. The current recession has very much crystallized voters' concerns and their critique of the lack of progress of their families for the last ten years. In a very

fundamental way, this recession seems different to people than previous recessions have been.

We finished focus groups a couple of months ago where people said there are two basic differences. In the last recession, which was 1982 in their minds, the titans laid people off; this time the titans closed. In the last recession, if you were willing to move to Texas out of Detroit you could keep your job; this time you have to move to Kyoto, and your kids probably can't get a job either. There is a sense that something very fundamental is changing here that is endangering the economic well being of America's families.

Fifty-one percent of Americans say that financial security for their families is one of the things they worry about most. And they are pessimistic about the long-term future. Even now voters' lack of confidence in the economy has been greater than at other comparable economic periods. Their lack of confidence—and you have other experts on your next panel who I think will testify to this as well—has been greater than the empirical indicators at every point in time.

Families worry about how they will make ends meet. They worry that someone in their family will lose a job, and they worry about how their children are going to get a good start. Record numbers of children are returning home to live and survive economically, and they are returning home as adults and with kids.

Blue collar families felt that they started out by sweeping the floors of their factories and moving up in the world, but they knew that their kids couldn't start out in the same way. So, they worked hard to put their kids into at least job training or into college. They now find that they risk losing their jobs, and their kids, who have come out of those training programs and out of college, can't get a job either.

The majority of Americans—57 percent—also believe that it is impossible to support a family on one income anymore, and lots of families, as we all know, have to try to do that.

Parents and families also feel that their problems are out of control today, and that their problems are broader than economic. On a personal and immediate level, parents worry that their own families may be out of control. Americans find that it is a tough time to be a parent and feel that even good parents can fail—something that seemed much less likely a generation ago. Seventy-two percent of Americans believe that American kids are having a tougher time growing up today, than they did when they were growing up.

Parents worry that their children face threats and choices that they would have had a hard time imagining when they were kids. For example, the average American believes that children are first confronted with drugs when they were six years old. They wonder if they could have handled that challenge at six years old. The average parent, trying as hard as he or she is, only gives themselves a B grade for the job they are doing with their children. They are worried about how they are going to be successful despite their best efforts.

Americans are also seriously worried about America's families' capacity overall to do what's right for children, to meet their basic needs—not provide the extras, but to provide the basics. Seventy percent of Americans think that things for children in this country

have gotten worse in the last five years, and even when it's closer to home, when they are asked specifically about their own state or their own neighborhood, two-thirds of Americans believe that things have gotten worse for children.

They worry overwhelmingly about a quality education for their children, that so many children are living in poverty, that children are not safe in their own neighborhoods, that a college education will be too expensive for most parents, that families will not be able to afford to buy basic health care, food and education, and that kids have no place to go after school and often go home to empty homes. The recession has only accentuated a lot of those concerns in American families' minds.

They feel on the edge and they feel there is something fundamentally wrong with American priorities that they are not getting any help out there. It used to be that all of these problems would have been seen very much as private concerns, and while people still want very much the locus of change to be within their own family and want parents and families to be in control of those changes, there has been a sea change in voters' attitudes in the last 20 years, about what the public role should be. Voters are looking for help from government, whether it's an income support, or having their workplace be more flexible and provide day care, whatever it is, even families that are most skeptical about government, most sensitive to taxes, want to see a more active public role in helping American families.

Finally, however, Americans are cynical that their political system will respond. Half say that they are not at all confident that government will do the right thing for children most of the time, and 85 percent agree that political leaders are not doing enough to help solve the problems facing children today. At the same time, Americans want to make families and children a national priority, and are willing to hold politicians accountable. Two-thirds say that they want someone to run for president who has a national agenda for children, and they would be more likely to support that candidate. And many people, when they speak most eloquently and most intensely about their concerns about the economy, about their fears for the future, talk about it in terms of their own family and their own kids.

There is an enormous amount of energy out there, there's an enormous amount of demand from the American public, to see you all respond and have the kinds of hearings and kinds of activities that you're doing here today. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Celinda Lake follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CELINDA LAKE, VICE PRESIDENT, GREENBERG-LAKE, WASHINGTON, DC

It is tough times for American families -- tough times to be a parent, tough times to be a kid, and in Americans' eyes not likely to get much better soon. Americans traditionally the optimists find their faith shaken in fundamental ways. They believe that the American family is worse off than it was 10 years ago (49 percent); only 39 percent believe the American family is better off. Moreover voters split over whether things will be better (42 percent) or worse (42 percent) in the next ten years. The American dream is to offer your children more than you had. You put up with everything in this lifetime, so your children can do better. In this decade for the first time the majority of Americans (62 percent) worry about whether they will be able to offer their children the same advantages that they had when they were growing up.

Concern about the future and the basics affect families across the economic spectrum. Today, 88 percent of Americans believe that they are part of the middle class, but they believe the middle class is fast disappearing -- leaving only the rich and the poor. Middle class and working families worry that even if they can hold on their children will slip into poverty.

Immediate financial security and long term economic decline are fundamental concerns facing families today. American families have faced a decade of stagnant incomes and 80 percent of Americans have seen their real incomes decline. The current recession has crystallized voters' concerns and their critique of the lack of progress for the average family in the last 10 years. Today, 51 percent of Americans say that financial security for their families is one of the things they worry about most. (Mass Mutual, 1991).

Voters are pessimistic about the longterm future of the economy and about the immediate recession. Even now voters' lack of confidence in the economy is greater than at other comparable economic periods. Families worry about how they will make ends meet, whether someone will lose a job, and how their children will get a good start. Record numbers of children are returning home to live to survive economically. Blue collar families find that they may lose their jobs and their college educated children can also not find work. The majority of Americans (57 percent) believe that it is impossible to support a family on one income anymore.

Parents and families also feel their problems are out of control today. On a personal and immediate level parents worry that their own families may be out of control. Americans find that it is a tough time to be a parent and feel that even good parents can fail -- something that seemed much less likely a generation ago. Seventy-two percent of Americans believe that children have

a tougher time growing up today than they had when they were growing up. (Greenberg/Lake and Tarrance Group, Coalition for America's Children, 1991). Parents worry that their children face threats and choices that they would have had a hard time imagining when they were young -- for example, the average American believes that children are first confronted with drugs with they are 6 years old. The average parent only gives themselves a B grade for the job they are doing with their children (Gallup, 1990).

Americans are seriously worried that American's families ability and capacity to do what is right for their children is declining. Overwhelmingly, Americans believe that the situation for children in the United States has gotten worse in the last 5 years (70 percent worse, 34 percent much worse). Even close to home, Americans believe that the situation for children has gotten worse in their own state in the last five years (65 percent, 29 percent much worse). (Coalition for America's Children).

Americans do not just worry about families being able to do "the extras", they worry about the average family's ability to provide the basics. Voters worry about a number of problems facing children and their concern for children is surprisingly consistent and intense across the electorate: 71 percent worry about the quality of education for children, 70 percent worry that so many children are living in poverty, 68 percent worry that children are not safe in their own neighborhoods, 66 percent worry that a

college education will be too expensive for most families to afford, 62 percent worry that they will not be able to provide the basics that they need in health care, food, and education; and 60 percent worry that kids have no place to go after school and often go home to empty homes. (Coalition for America's Children.)

Americans believe that the problems facing children affect us all. They also believe that the most fundamental problems including providing the basics for children affect not just poor families, but all families today. American families feel on the edge and that seems fundamentally wrong to American voters.

Voters believe that the recent declining economy has affected families and children across the board, further deteriorating their situation. Today, 41 percent choose as the top impact that public school education has deteriorated because of budget cuts, 39 percent say that children do not have the basics like sufficient food, clothing, and housing in safe neighborhoods, and 35 percent say that the major impact of the recession on children is that more children do not have adequate health insurance and may not get the medical attention that they need. (Greenberg/Lake and Tarrance Group, Kids Count, 1991).

Voters have clearly moved children's needs into the public arena. There has been a sea change in voters' attitudes in the last 20 years about the role that government should play in this

arena. For example, where once a majority of working women did not want the federal government to spend more money on day care and did not believe that companies should be required to provide day care; now 87 percent believe that their should be a joint effort between private employers and government to provide day care and a majority support government funding for day care, even if their taxes went up. Americans want government to act on behalf of children and families and to make families a top priority. Even voters who are sensitive to taxes and skeptical about government feel that there should be a more active public role in helping American families.

Americans, however, are cynical that their political system will respond. Half (50 percent) say that they are not at all confident that government will do what is right for children most of the time and 85 percent agree that political leaders are not doing enough to help solve the problems facing children today. (Coalition for America's children.) At the same time Americans want a to make families and children a national priority and are willing to hold politicians accountable: 67 percent, for example say they would be more likely to support a politician who had an agenda for children. (Coalition for America's Children.)

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. I want to thank both of our pollsters, and we understand your time urgency if you have to leave. We're sorry it went so long. I'm sure Jason was pleased to hear that you didn't have frog disection in the educational standards that you polled for.

We are going to move from the pollsters to the statisticians so, Don Hernandez, the floor is yours. We are anxious to see how the statistics look vis-a-vis the polling.

STATEMENT OF DONALD HERNANDEZ, PH.D., CHIEF, MARRIAGE AND FAMILIES STATISTICS BRANCH, POPULATION DIVISION, BUREAU 20 OF THE CENSUS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, WASHINGTON, DC.

Dr. HERNANDEZ. Good morning, Madam Chairwoman and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the subject of the American family.

The American family is a dynamic institution that has experienced enormous change during the past quarter century. This morning I will summarize some of the important trends in family life that have profoundly affected children and youth, and their parents.

The trends I have chosen to feature today are primarily of two kinds. First are changes in family living situations, namely, the rise in one-parent families and stepfamilies, and the rise in mothers' labor force participation. Second are changes in family income and poverty.

The past quarter century brought a large increase in one-parent families. The proportion of families with children that were maintained by a lone parent more than doubled during the past 20 years, rising from 11 percent in 1970, to 20 percent in 1980, and then to 24 percent in 1990. By 1990, 7.8 million family households were maintained by a lone parent. The rise in one-parent families is the result of two changes, increased divorce and the rising proportion of births occurring to unmarried women.

One-parent family living is often a transitional situation, however, lasting only until the parent, usually the mother, marries or remarries. Consequently, our projections show that although about 25 percent of children live with one parent at any given time, nearly 60 percent of all children born during recent years may be expected to spend one or more years in a one-parent family before reaching age 18.

When single or divorced parents marry, a stepfamily usually is created with either a stepfather or a stepmother. Between 1980 and 1990, the proportion of all families with children that were stepfamilies increased from 13 to 16 percent. By 1990, stepfamilies and one-parent families together accounted for 40 percent of all families with children.

A second major change in living situations of American families involves the dramatic increase in dual-earner, two-parent families, largely as a result of increased labor force participation by women. Among women with school-age children, labor force participation increased by one-half, from 49 percent in 1970 to 74 percent in 1990. Among wives with preschool children under age six, labor

force participation nearly doubled, from 30 percent in 1970 to 59 percent in 1990.

Increases in dual-earner families were spread about equally across the 1970s and 1980s. By 1991, 63 percent of all two-parent families had both a mother and a father in the labor force. I might add that among mother-child single-parent families, 68 percent of mothers worked in 1991.

With increases in one-parent families, and the still larger increases in dual-earner, two-parent families, by 1990 only 15 percent of all families with children were married-couple families where the husband worked year-around full-time and the wife did not work for pay during the year.

These increases in one-parent families, stepfamilies, and dual-earner families are important because they have led to major changes in child care and to new and more complex family relationships. But they also are important because these families experience differences in income and poverty.

Taking a long view, real median family income for married couples more than doubled between 1947 and 1973, climbing from $17,000 to $35,000 per year in 1990 dollars. Since 1973, married-couple families have experienced periods of both decline and increase in real income, which overall have nearly counterbalanced each other. By 1990, the real median income for married-couple families was $40,000 per year, only 11 percent more than in 1973, 17 years earlier.

For families with female householders and no spouse present, median family income increased by much less, rising from $12,000 to $16,000 between 1947 and 1973. By 1990, female householder families had a real median income of $17,000 per year, only 5 percent more than in 1973.

The median family incomes of married-couple families with children were very different, depending on the work status of the husband and wife. Less work generally means less income. In 1990, married-couple families with children had a median income of about $53,000 if both the husband and the wife worked full-time year-around. This was nearly $20,000 per year more than for married couples with children where the husband worked but the wife did not work for pay during the year.

Family householders who are young or who have low levels of education also have comparatively low family incomes. Generally, median family incomes were more than twice as high for householders with four years of college or more, compared to those with four years of high school or less.

Stepfamilies also tend to have lower incomes than two-parent families where all the children were born to both parents. The economic disadvantage of one-parent families is much larger than the disadvantage of stepfamilies. Between 1980 and 1990, two-parent families had a poverty rate of 7 to 10 percent, but mother-child families had a poverty rate more than four times larger, at 43 to 48 percent.

Overall, the past quarter century brought an important increase in the poverty rate for families with children. Between 1966 and 1979, families with children had a poverty rate between 11 and 13 percent. After 1979, the poverty rate for families with children

climbed to a high of 18 percent in 1983, and then declined to 16 percent between 1986 and 1989. As of 1990, 16.4 percent of families with children were in poverty.

Focusing on poverty rates for children themselves, 20.6 percent, or 13.4 million children under age 18, lived in poverty in 1990. By comparison, in the peak year of 1983, their poverty rate was 22.3 percent and 13.9 million lived in poverty.

One reason for interest and concern about families with low or below-poverty incomes, is that they may experience difficulty in purchasing necessities or the goods and services that most families expect. Perhaps the largest single purchase is the family home.

The proportion of two-parent families that owned their own homes reached a peak in 1980, at 76 or 77 percent. The historic trend then reversed. By 1990, home ownership among two-parent families had declined to 73 percent. For mother-child families, home ownership also reached a peak in 1980, but at the much lower level of 35 or 36 percent. By 1990, home ownership among mother-child families had declined to 30 percent. Low-income families are much less likely than high-income families to be homeowners.

For the Spring of 1988, the Census Bureau, for the first time, developed results estimating the affordability of homes. The results show both for married-couple families and for female householder families who were renters and had incomes below $35,000, that more than nine out of ten could not afford to buy a median-priced home in their region. In addition, more than three out of every five married-couple renters with incomes of $35,000 to $60,000 a year, could not afford to buy a median-priced home. Even among married-couple homeowners with incomes of $20-35,000, more than one-fourth could not now afford to buy a median-priced home.

The American family has experienced great change during the past quarter century. I have discussed several trends this morning in my oral testimony. My written testimony, which I have submitted for the record, contains more specific statistics on these trends and others.

As we look to the future, a large proportion of Americans will continue to experience living in one-parent families, stepfamilies, or both. It also appears likely that mothers' labor force participation will continue to climb, and that the vast majority of families with children will have working mothers.

It is much less clear, at least to me, what, if any, future changes may occur in income and poverty or in the costs and affordability of housing. But the historic changes in the family and in mothers' work during the past quarter century guarantee that people and families during the coming decade will experience much larger numbers and much more diverse family transitions than did Americans living during the first two-thirds of this century. Thank you very much.

[Prepared statement of Donald Hernandez Ph.D., follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DONALD HERNANDEZ, PH.D., CHIEF, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY STATISTICS BRANCH, POPULATION DIVISION, BUREAU 20 OF THE CENSUS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, WASHINGTON, DC

The American family is a dynamic institution that has experienced enormous change during the past quarter century. This morning I will summarize some of the important trends that characterize changes in family life -- changes that have profoundly affected children and youth, and their parents.

The information in my presentation is drawn primarily from ongoing household surveys conducted by the Bureau of the Census. These surveys provide the basis for national profiles of the social and economic conditions and trends experienced by U.S. families.

The trends I have chosen to feature today are primarily of two kinds. First are changes in family living situations, namely, the rise in one-parent families and stepfamilies, and the rise in mothers' labor force participation. Second are changes in family income and poverty.

The past quarter century brought an increase in one-parent family living. The proportion of families with children that were maintained by a lone parent more than doubled during the past 20 years, rising from 11 percent in 1970, to 20 percent in 1980, and then to 24 percent in 1990. By 1990, 7.8 million family households were maintained by a lone parent. The rise in one-parent families is the result of two changes: increased divorce and the rising proportion of births occurring to unmarried women.

One-parent family living is often a transitional situation, however, lasting only until the parent, usually the mother,

marries or remarries. Consequently our projections show that, although about 25 percent of children live with one parent at any given time, nearly 60 percent of all children born during recent years may be expected to spend one year or more in a one-parent family before reaching age 18.

When single or divorced parents marry, the result is usually the creation of a stepfamily with either a stepfather or a stepmother, and perhaps stepsisters and stepbrothers. In 1980, 13 percent of all families with children were stepfamilies, and this increased to 16 percent in 1990. By 1990, stepfamilies and one-parent families together accounted for 40 percent of all families with children.

A second major change in living situations of American families involves the dramatic increase in dual-earner two-parent families, largely as a result of increased labor force participation by women. Among wives with school-age children 6 to 17 years old, labor force participation increased by one-half from 49 percent in 1970 to 74 percent in 1990. Among wives with preschool children under age 6, labor force participation doubled, from 30 percent in 1970 to 59 percent in 1990.

Increases in dual-earner two-parent families were spread about equally across the 1970s and 1980s. By 1991, 63 percent of all two-parent families had both a mother and a father who were in the labor force. I might add that among mother-child single-parent families, 68 percent of mothers worked in 1991.

With the increases in one-parent families, and the still

larger increases in dual-earner two-parent families, by 1990 only 15 percent of all families with related children were married-couple families where the husband worked year-around full-time and the wife did not work for pay during the year.

The increases in one-parent families, stepfamilies, and dual-earner families are important, because they have led to major changes in child care and to new and more complex family relationships. But, they also are important because these families experience differences in income and poverty.

Income results presented here include wage or salary income, self-employment income, social security, cash public assistance, and various other cash income sources, but do not include noncash sources of income, such as food stamps, medicare, and medicaid.

Taking a long view, real median family income for married-couple families more than doubled between 1947 and 1973, climbing from $17,000 to $36,000 per year, in 1990 dollars. Since 1973, married-couple families have experienced periods both of decline and of increase in real median income, which overall have nearly counter-balanced each other. By 1990, the real median income for married-couple families was about $40,000, only 11 percent greater than in 1973, 17 years earlier, in 1990 dollars.

For families with female householders and no spouse present, median family income increased by much less, rising from about $12,000 in 1947 to about $16,000 in 1973, in 1990 dollars. By 1990, female householder families had a real median income of about $17,000 per year, only 5 percent higher than in 1973.

The median family incomes of married-couple families with (related) children were very different, depending on the work status of the husband and wife. Less work generally means less income. In 1990, married-couple families with (related) children had a median income of about $53,000 if both the husband and the wife worked year-around full-time. This was nearly $20,000 per year more than the median income of $34,000 if the husband worked and the wife did not work for pay during the year.

Family householders who are young or who have low levels of education also have comparatively low family incomes. Among family householders with less than four years of high school, median family income in 1990 ranged from a low of $9,000 if they were under age 25, to a high of $30,000 if they were 45 to 64 years old.

Generally, median family incomes were more than twice as high for householders with four years of college or more, compared to those with four years of high school or less. For college-educated or higher householders in 1990, median family income ranged from a low of $26,000 if they were under age 25, to a high of $70,000 per year if they were 45 to 64 years old.

Stepfamilies also tend to have lower incomes than two-parent families where all the children were born to both parents. In 1985, 37 percent of stepfamilies had incomes under $20,000 per year, compared to 27 percent for two-parent families without step or adopted children.

The economic disadvantage of one-parent families is much

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larger than the disadvantage of stepfamilies. Between 1980 and 1990, married-couple families with related children had a poverty rate of 7 to 10 percent, but female householder families with related children had a poverty rate at least four times larger, at 43 to 48 percent.

Overall, the past quarter century brought an important increase in the poverty rate for families with related children. Between 1966 and 1979, families with children had a poverty rate between 11 and 13 percent. After 1979, the poverty rate for families with related children climbed to a high of 18 percent in 1983, and then declined to 16 percent between 1986 and 1989. As of 1990, 16.4 percent of families with children were in poverty.

Focusing on poverty rates for children themselves, 20.6 percent, or 13.4 million children under age 18, lived in poverty in 1990. By comparison, in the peak year of 1983, their poverty rate was 22.3 percent, and 13.9 million lived in poverty.

One reason for interest and concern about families with low incomes, or families with below-poverty incomes, is that such families may experience difficulty in purchasing necessities or the goods and services that most families expect. Perhaps the largest single purchase that a family may make is for a home of its own.

The proportion of two-parent families that owned their own homes reached a peak of about 76 or 77 percent in 1980. The historic trend then reversed, and by 1990 about 73 percent of two-parent families were homeowners. The proportion of mother-

child families owning their own homes also reached a peak in 1980, but at the much lower level of 35 or 36 percent. By 1990 the proportion of mother-child families that owned their own homes had declined to 30 percent.

Families with low incomes are much less likely than families with high incomes to own their own homes. In 1987, among two-parent families, homeownership rates ranged from a low of 38 to 52 percent if their incomes were under $20,000 per year, to 60 to 74 percent if their incomes were between $20,000 and $35,000 per year, and to more than 80 percent if their incomes were more than $35,000 per year.

For the Spring of 1988, the Census Bureau, for the first time, developed results estimating the affordability of homes. The results show, for both married-couple families and female householder families who were renters with incomes below $35,000, that at least 90 percent could not now afford to buy a median-priced home in their region. The results also show for married-couple renters with incomes of $35,000 to $60,000 that 60 to 82 percent could not afford to buy a median-priced house. Even among married-couple homeowner families with incomes between $20,000 and $35,000, more than 25 percent could not afford to buy a median-priced home.

The American family has experienced great change during the past quarter century. I have discussed several trends this morning. There are a few additional areas I would like to touch on in a summary way.

Family size has declined in recent years largely as a result of falling fertility. For example, women born in 1940 had an average of 2.8 children, compared with women born in 1960 who expect to complete their childbearing with an average of only 2.1 children. These declines translate into family size decline for both two-parent and one-parent families. Between 1970 and 1990 the average number of children under 18 per family with children fell from 2.33 to 1.87 children per family for two-parent families, and from 2.36 to 1.72 children per family for mother-child families.

During the past decade, the proportion of householders under age 30 in two-parent families has declined somewhat, from 26 percent in 1980 to 16 percent in 1990, while the proportion of householders under age 30 in mother-child families remained about constant at 30 percent in 1980 and 29 percent in 1990.

There has been popular comment recently concerning the proportion of young adults staying or returning to live in their parents' home. In 1990, 53 percent of young adults age 18 to 24 years lived in their parents' home, compared to 48 percent in 1980, 47 percent in 1970, and 43 percent in 1960.

Other topics of expressed interest involve the distribution of family income by quintile and the cost of housing. Families with incomes in the bottom, second, third, fourth, or top fifth of the income distribution are referred to as having incomes in the bottom, second, third, fourth, or top quintile of the income distribution. In 1990, the dollar values of the lower limits of

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family income quintiles were $16,846 for the second quintile, $29,044 for the third quintile, $42,040 for the fourth quintile, and $61,490 for the fifth quintile.

Also in 1990, married-couple families accounted for 52 percent of families in the bottom fifth of the income distribution, 75 percent in the second fifth, 84 percent in the middle fifth, 89 percent in the fourth quintile, and 94 percent in the top fifth. On the other hand, female householder families accounted for 42 percent of families in the lowest fifth of the income distribution, and 20 percent in the second fifth, compared to only 12 percent in the middle fifth, 7 percent in the fourth quintile, and 4 percent in the top fifth of the income distribution.

The share of aggregate income received by the highest fifth of households increased from 43.3 percent in 1970, to 44.1 percent in 1980 and 46.6 percent in 1990. The shares received by the first through the fourth income quintiles have declined, at least since 1980. The share of income received by the first (lowest) quintile of households was 4.1 percent in 1970, 4.2 percent in 1980, and 3.9 percent in 1990. The share received by the second quintile was 10.8 percent in 1970, 10.2 percent in 1980, and 9.6 percent in 1990. The share received by the third quintile was 17.4 percent in 1970, 16.8 percent in 1980, and 15.9 percent in 1990. Finally, the share received by the fourth quintile was 24.5 percent in 1970, 24.8 percent in 1980, and 24.0 percent in 1990.

Household net worth is estimated as the value of the household's assets minus its liabilities. Major assets not included in Census Bureau estimates of net worth include equities in pension plans, the cash value of life insurance policies, and the value of home furnishings and jewelry. In 1988, the bottom fifth of the income distribution owned 7 percent of the total net worth, the second fifth owned 12 percent of the total net worth, the middle fifth owned 16 percent of the total net worth, the fourth quintile owned 21 percent of the total net worth, and the top fifth owned 44 percent of total net worth.

The most recent data on the cost of housing show for 1987 that the proportion spending less than 25 percent of their monthly income on housing costs was 66 percent for two-parent families, compared to 28 percent for mother-child families. On the other hand, the proportion spending 50 percent or more of their monthly income on housing was 6 percent for two-parent families, compared to 36 percent for mother-child families.

The data also show that the median percent of monthly income paid for housing was 20 percent for two-parent families, compared to 36 percent for mother-child families. Since mother-child families had a median family income only about two-fifths as high as two-parent families ($13,000 versus $33,000 in 1987 dollars), and since mother-child families paid a much larger proportion of their comparatively small incomes for housing, mother-child families were at a double disadvantage in the amount of income which, after paying their housing costs, they had left to spend

for food, clothing, transportation, medical care, and other necessities. (The Bureau of Labor Statistics analyzes results from the Consumer Expenditure Survey, the most comprehensive data source for estimates of the costs of major family non-housing expenditures.)

As we look to the future, a large proportion of Americans will continue to experience living in one-parent families, stepfamilies, or both. It also appears likely that mother's labor force participation will continue to climb, and that the vast majority of families with children will have working mothers.

It is much less clear, at least to me, what, if any future, changes may occur in income and poverty or in the costs and affordability of homes. But the historic changes in family living arrangements and in mothers' work which we have experienced during the last quarter century guarantee that people and families during the coming decade will experience a much larger number of family transitions, and have family experiences which are much more varied, than did Americans living during the first two-thirds of this century.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you very, very much for being here.

Suppose we move on down to Thomas Plewes. We will put your statement in the record, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS J. PLEWES, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. PLEWES. Thank you, Madam Chair, for this opportunity to respond to questions recently submitted by this committee about data that the Bureau of Labor Statistics has on the labor force experience of American families and the impact of that experience on children. You will notice my testimony that has been submitted is closely related to that submitted by the Census Bureau. First of all, we use the same data source; secondly, labor force trends partly reflect population trends and what happens with income, as we reported to you, largely depends on what happens in the labor force.

At the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we have maintained data series for many years that track changes in the labor force status of families by employment status of parents as well as by family composition. Over the years, a good bit has been written about these changes and they have been the subject of much we have heard about today, so I will not dwell on that portion of my testimony.

More recently, new data have been developed which help us to see how short-term swings in the business cycle affect parents and children.

I will summarize some of the major family and labor force trends, some of which have been mentioned previously by Mr. Hernandez: A major change has been the fact that more and more children are spending at least part of their lives in one-parent families. Twenty-six percent of all families with children contained only one parent by 1991, compared to 20 percent in 1980.

The tendency of mothers to work or look for work has been increasing over the last several decades. Their labor force participation rate reached 67 percent in 1991, up ten percentage points since 1980, and 45 percentage points since 1950. Participation rates for mothers with very young children—under three years old—went from 42 percent in 1980 to 55 percent in 1991. By 1991, a little over half the mothers with children under one year of age were in the labor force.

As mothers' labor force participation grew, especially among wives, the number and proportion of dual-worker families—that is, two-parent families in which both the mother and father were in the labor force—also grew. Some of those numbers have been given to you previously.

Let me now turn to our newer data series which show the effect of the current economic contraction on families and children. Overall, about 5.9 million families contained an unemployed member in the fourth quarter of 1991, 8.9 percent, or almost one family in 11. Two years earlier, before the recession began, such families numbered about 4.7 million, or one family in 14. To put these numbers

in perspective, in 1983, as we emerged from the 1981-82 recession, this was the first year these data were available, the proportion was 12.8 percent, or about one in eight families, almost 4 full percentage points higher than it is today.

In the fourth quarter of 1989, there were about 1.8 million families with children in which one or both parents were unemployed. This represented about 5.6 percent of all families with children. By the fourth quarter of 1991, about a year and a half after the onset of the downturn, 2.4 million families with children contained an unemployed parent, that is, about 7.4 percent of the total with children.

In the fourth quarter of 1991, 4.4 million children were in families that contained an unemployed parent, 1.2 million of whom lived with only one parent. Of those children in two-parent families, about 54 percent were in families in which the father was unemployed but not the mother.

In such cases, maternal employment was likely to provide some relief from economic privation. Still, the fact is that despite the enormous labor force gains on the part of women and mothers in recent decades, working fathers tend to earn more than working mothers. And as a result, fathers remain the economic mainstay of about 75 percent of two-parent families.

An additional 41 percent of the children in two-parent families in which a parent was jobless were in families in which the mother but not the father was unemployed. On an annual basis, married mothers' earnings account for about 30 percent of family income, on average.

Madam Chair, I have appended several tables to my statement which the committee may find helpful. I will be glad to answer any questions on these data the members of the committee may have.

[Prepared statement of Thomas J. Plewes follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THOMAS J. PLEWES, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, WASHINGTON, DC

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to questions recently submitted by this Committee about data that the Bureau of Labor Statistics has on the labor force experience of American families and the impact of that experience on children.

At the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we have maintained data series that extend for many years to allow researchers and analysts to track changes in the labor force status of families, by the employment status of parents as well as by family composition.

In addition, more recently, several data series have been developed which enable researchers to see how the relatively short-term swings of the business cycle affect parents and children. We are able to see that economic downturns affect families in different ways.

Let me first address this issue in a historical perspective. The major trends in family composition and parental labor force activity that began to emerge more than 20 years ago have continued into the early 1990's. One important consequence of these changes is that more and more children are spending at least part of their lives in one-parent families. And, regardless of whether they live with one parent or two, their mothers have become increasingly likely to be in the labor force.

By 1991, 26 percent of all families with children contained only one parent, compared with 20 percent in 1980. Families maintained by women account for most of the gain in single-parent families. Nonetheless, the small number maintained by single fathers nearly doubled between 1980 and 1991.

Increases in the propensity of mothers to work or look for work have been occurring over the past several decades. Their labor force participation rate reached 67 percent in 1991, up 10 percentage points since 1980 and 45 points since 1950. Participation rates for mothers with very young children (under 3) increased from 42 percent in 1980 to 55 percent in 1991. In fact, by 1991, a little over half the mothers with children under age 1 were in the labor force.

As mothers' labor force participation grew, especially among wives, so did the number and proportion of dual-worker

families--that is, two-parent families in which both the mother and father were in the labor force. Between 1980 and 1991, these families grew from 42 percent of all families with children to 48 percent. Accompanying that growth in dual-worker families has been a fall-off in the proportion of so-called "traditional" families. These are married-couple families in which the father was in the labor force but not the mother. As late as 1980, "traditional" families made up about one-third of all families with children; by 1991, they accounted for less than one-fourth of families with children.

Now, I will turn to our newer data series which show the effects of the current economic contraction on families and children. Overall, 5.9 million families contained an unemployed member in the fourth quarter of 1991, almost 1 family in 11 (8.9 percent). Two years earlier, before the recession began, such families numbered 4.7 million, or 1 family in 14 (7.1 percent). To put this into perspective, in 1983, the first year data were available, the proportion was 12.8 percent (about 1 in 8 families), almost 4 full percentage points higher than it is today.

(To illustrate the impact of the economic downturn, the comparisons here are for the fourth quarters of 1989 and 1991. These quarterly data are free from the influence of seasonal events.)

In the fourth quarter of 1989, there were about 1.8 million families with children in which one or both parents were unemployed. This represented about 5.6 percent of all families with children. By the fourth quarter of 1991, about a year-and-a-half after the onset of the downturn, 2.4 million families with children contained an unemployed parent, that is, 7.4 percent of the total with children.

In the fourth quarter of 1991, 4.4 million children were in families that contained an unemployed parent, 1.2 million of whom lived with only one parent. Of the 3.2 million children in two-parent families, about 54 percent were in families in which the father was unemployed, but not the mother. In such cases, maternal employment is likely to provide some relief from economic privation. Still, the fact is, despite enormous labor force gains on the part of women and mothers in recent decades, working fathers tend to earn more than working mothers. They remain the economic mainstay of about 75 percent of two-parent families.

An additional 41 percent of the children in two-parent families in which a parent was jobless were in families in which the mother, but not the father, was unemployed. On an annual basis, married mothers' earnings account for approximately 30 percent of family income, on average.

Madam Chair, I have appended several tables to my statement which the Committee may find helpful. I would now be glad to answer any questions on these data the Members of the Committee may have.

Table 1. Families by type, presence of children, and labor force status of parents, March 1980 and March 1991

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	March 1980		March 1991	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total families	59,910	100.0	66,959	100.0
With children under 18	31,325	52.3	32,981	49.3
With no children under 18	28,585	47.7	33,978	50.7
With children under 18	31,325	100.0	32,981	100.0
Two-parent families	24,974	79.7	24,435	74.1
Both parents in labor force1/	13,108	41.8	15,791	47.9
Father in labor force, not mother1/	10,795	34.5	7,564	22.9
Neither parent in labor force	621	2.0	499	1.5
Families maintained by women2/	5,718	18.3	7,323	22.2
Mother in labor force	3,833	12.2	4,970	15.1
Mother not in labor force	1,885	6.0	2,353	7.1
Families maintained by men2/	633	2.0	1,223	3.7
Father in labor force1/	561	1.8	1,113	3.4
Father not in labor force	73	.2	109	.3

1/ Includes fathers in the Armed Forces.

2/ Person maintaining family is single (never married), divorced, separated or widowed.

NOTE: Families include both primary families and unrelated sub-families. Children refer to own children of the husband, wife, or person maintaining the family and include sons, daughters, adopted, and stepchildren. Not included are nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and other related and unrelated children.

Table 2. Children under 18 years old in families by type of family and labor force status of parents, March 1980 and March 1991.

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	March 1980		March 1991	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total children	59,714	100.0	60,395	100.0
In two-parent families	48,155	80.6	45,943	76.1
Both parents in labor force1/	24,084	40.3	28,021	46.4
Father in labor force, not mother1/	21,956	36.8	15,720	26.0
Neither parent in labor force	1,288	2.2	1,105	1.8
In families maintained by women2/	10,582	17.7	12,615	20.9
Mother in labor force	6,617	11.1	7,920	13.1
Mother not in labor force	3,964	6.6	4,684	7.8
In families maintained by men2/	978	1.6	1,836	3.0
Father in labor force1/	873	1.5	1,678	2.8
Father not in labor force	105	.2	159	.3

1/ Includes fathers in the Armed Forces.

2/ Person maintaining family is single (never married), divorced, separated or widowed.

NOTE: Families include both primary families and unrelated sub-families. Children refer to own children of the husband, wife, or person maintaining the family and include sons, daughters, adopted, and stepchildren. Not included are nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and other related and unrelated children.

Table 3. Unemployed parents by family type, fourth quarter averages, not seasonally adjusted, 1989, 1990, and 1991

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	IV 1989		IV 1990		IV 1991	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Families with children under 18.....	31,866	100.0	31,879	100.0	32,176	100.0
With unemployed parent(s).....	1,797	5.6	2,042	6.4	2,372	7.4
Two-parent families.....	24,028	100.0	23,879	100.0	23,850	100.0
With unemployed parent(s).....	1,287	5.4	1,472	6.2	1,706	7.2
With unemployed parent(s).....	1,287	100.0	1,472	100.0	1,706	100.0
Father unemployed, not mother.	600	46.6	737	50.1	891	52.2
Mother unemployed, not father.	626	48.6	655	44.5	715	41.9
Both parents unemployed.....	61	4.7	80	5.4	100	5.9
Families maintained by women1/.....	6,667	100.0	6,795	100.0	7,072	100.0
Mother unemployed.....	452	6.8	483	7.1	549	7.8
Families maintained by men1/.....	1,171	100.0	1,205	100.0	1,254	100.0
Father unemployed.....	58	5.0	87	7.2	117	9.3

1/ Person maintaining family is single (never married), divorced, separated or widowed.

NOTE: Families include primary families only. Children refer to own children of the husband, wife, or person maintaining the family and include sons, daughters, adopted, and stepchildren. Not included are nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and other related and unrelated children.

Table 4. Children with unemployed parents by type of family, fourth quarter averages, not seasonally adjusted, 1989, 1990, and 1991

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	IV 1989		IV 1990		IV 1991	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Children under 18 years old	56,261	100.0	56,931	100.0	57,117	100.0
With unemployed parent(s)	3,289	5.8	3,868	6.8	4,430	7.8
In two-parent families	43,358	100.0	43,586	100.0	43,364	100.0
With unemployed parent(s)	2,366	5.5	2,827	6.5	3,258	7.5
With unemployed parent(s)	2,366	100.0	2,827	100.0	3,258	100.0
Father unemployed, not mother	1,134	47.9	1,423	50.3	1,750	53.7
Mother unemployed, not father	1,114	47.1	1,237	43.8	1,326	40.7
Both parents unemployed	118	5.0	167	5.9	183	5.6
In families maintained by women1/	11,226	100.0	11,638	100.0	12,006	100.0
Mother unemployed	838	7.5	917	7.9	999	8.3
In families maintained by men1/	1,677	100.0	1,707	100.0	1,747	100.0
Father unemployed	85	5.1	124	7.3	173	9.9

1/ Person maintaining family is single (never married), divorced, separated or widowed.

NOTE: Families include primary families only. Children refer to own children of the husband, wife or person maintaining the family and include sons, daughters, adopted, and stepchildren. Not included are nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and other related and unrelated children.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you very much. I think both of your testimonies are very helpful. It's good to see real government statistics that can help us.

Gary, thank you so much for being patient with our pollsters. I think they rule the city. But we thank you very much for being here, and we'll put your statement in the record and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF GARY L. BAUER, PRESIDENT, FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. BAUER. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. It's a great pleasure to spend some time with the committee this morning. I will submit my statement for the record.

Madam Chairwoman, as you know, I've been in Washington since the early '70s trying to influence public policy, and I suppose I probably have testified before Congress 30 or 40 times over those years. As a result of that, I have somewhat low expectations of what a hearing can accomplish. Hearings come and go, but a lot of the problems we are talking about today remain the same.

I'd like to be bold enough in the time that I've got with the committee to actually make some suggestions to you about what this committee could do to perhaps solve or deal with some of these problems.

Number one, American families with children are desperately in need of tax relief, and I think that the select committee could become a battering ram in the United States Congress on the issue of tax relief for families with children.

I would urge your side of the aisle to go to the Ways and Means Committee and to suggest to them that the current Democratic tax bill that contains no tax relief specifically for families with children, is unacceptable. And I would urge the Republicans on the committee to go to the White House and tell President Bush that his proposal to increase the personal exemption by $500 is parsimonious and, in fact, needs to be increased by several thousand, like you and Congressman Wolf and others have suggested. I think those kinds of changes in both pieces of tax legislation would be a major improvement.

Second of all, I would urge the committee to resist big spending schemes to deal with the problems of the family, no matter how tempting those spending schemes might be.

If you look at what the United States has done since 1960, you will see that in almost every area dealing with families spending has gone through the roof. And yet when you look at what's happened to American children since 1960, we did not get the results that the experts promised us when they suggested these new programs. By almost any measurement, America's children are worse off in 1992 than they were in 1960.

Youth homicide is up, youth suicide is up, drug overdoses, teen pregnancy, venereal disease, et cetera. The money has not solved the problem.

There is a child psychologist that I know you are familiar with, Madam Chairwoman, Urie Brofenbrenner, and he was asked once, what is the key ingredient in the successful development of the

human being, and he responded, "Someone has to be crazy about the kids, some adult has got to make a child the most important thing in his life." And I would submit to you that a GS 15 at the Department of Health and Human Services cannot do that for a child. An Assistant Secretary of Education can't do that for a child. Children need parents, a mother and a father, and many of the problems are because an increasing number of our children do not have two parents who are crazy about them and who are there to raise them in these difficult times.

I would urge the committee to become an aggressive supporter of traditional values. I think a lot of the testimony we've heard this morning as well as the testimony from Senator Rockefeller, indicates that the American people are hungry for someone who will speak up for such values. In fact, many parents feel that they are surrounded by hostile territory.

Television was mentioned this morning. I would love, Madam Chairwoman, to see you hold a hearing in which you call in those Hollywood producers and the Madison Avenue hotshots and some of the people who make the music videos, and concede to them that they have a First Amendment right to do that, but ask them what kind of citizens they are being when they feed our children a steady diet of sex and violence and messages that exploit women. I think the American people would celebrate the fact that Members of Congress were willing to take on these individuals that have so much influence on what our children believe about how they should live their lives.

I think in the area of welfare reform this committee could do a lot. We see in our inner cities what's happened because of the welfare system. We've rewarded promiscuity and bad behavior and we've penalized people who form families and stay together, and then we act surprised when we get more bad behavior and less good behavior in our inner cities.

On the same theme of speaking up for traditional values, Senator Rockefeller and several others mentioned the Title 20 program, that it's the only government program that teaches young people the value of abstinence, and yet I'm afraid to say there was a fairly significant effort in the past year to zero-fund that program—and my understanding is, Madam Chairwoman, that you were involved in that effort and, quite frankly, I don't understand it. I hope you'll take another look at that and become the leading advocate of the only program that explains to children why they should delay sexual activity.

And, finally, I'd like to quote something that Abraham Lincoln said. He said that "In a democracy, public opinion is everything," and I think he's right, and public officials have a lot to do with molding public opinion.

I would hope that public officials would stop talking about the American family, the traditional American family, as if it were a dinosaur. I've heard statistics that say only 6 percent of American families are traditional, only 10 percent of American families are traditional. The fact of the matter is that the overwhelming majority of the American people live in households headed by a married couple, and when I think that public leaders suggest that the family unit as we once knew it is dead, that they distort public

policy and they make millions of Americans feel as if they are some sort of an anachronism or hopelessly behind the time.

Most Americans are traditional, whether both parents are working or not. Most Americans still want traditional things for their children. Most Americans hope for their children, the same things that parents have always hoped for. Thank you very much.

[Prepared statement of Gary L. Bauer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GARY L. BAUER, PRESIDENT, FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, DC

MADAME CHAIRWOMAN, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to offer testimony on the current status of families today. I hope that my comments will be helpful to members of your committee as you consider various issues of concern to families in the weeks and months ahead.

MADAME CHAIRWOMAN, a recent Gallup poll asked Americans to assess the social environment for raising children today. The responses to the poll suggest that among the casualties of recent changes in family life may be the Dad who gives his children one of those age-old lectures about how easy they have it compared to the days when he had to walk four miles to school in a foot of snow.

According to Gallup, 81 percent of American adults consider it "more difficult being a child today than when I was growing up."

Such perceptions are rooted in the reality that childhood is less and less an age of innocence in which children are protected from the strains and stresses of adult life and more and more a time when youngsters are expected to act like minature adults capable of responsibly finding their own way through the maze of often-conflicting messages directed at them. Given the moral confusion that surrounds them, it is little wonder that children often stumble and fall. It is little wonder that child well-being has declined over the last quarter-century in almost every imaginable way (youth suicide, youth homicide, SAT scores, teen sexual involvement, etc.). And it is little wonder that parents often sense that they are swimming upsteam against cultural forces that are no longer friendly to children.

Indeed, many social institutions once counted on to protect child safety and reinforce family values -- such as schools, youth organizations, and the entertainment industry -- are now often viewed by parents with skepticism and even hostility. Parents today sometimes ask themselves questions one can hardly imagine parents asking a generation ago: Is my boy's Scoutmaster a pedophile? What are the chances that one of my child's classmates will bring a gun to school? Will the school nurse give my daughter contraceptives without my permission? Has my child's day care provider ever been accused of child abuse? Will watching the

evening news expose my child to the graphic details of yet another sex scandal?

To be sure, many of these fears could be considered irrational from the standpoint of statistical probability. But we have seen them arise, unprovoked, in recent focus group discussions about the challenges facing families today -- a fact which causes me to believe that the breakdown in the cultural consensus about the values we want to transmit to our young and the inability of our criminal justice system to punish lawlessness have left many parents feeling alone and afraid for their children.

These feelings of isolation are often fanned by various reports that traditional two-parent families are on the brink of extinction. Such reports almost always contain bogus statistics that have been deliberately twisted by the Alternative Lifestyles Lobby to obscure the fact that seven in ten Americans currently reside in a household headed by a married couple. (In at least one popular version of the numbers game, "traditional" family is defined so narrowly that even Beaver Cleaver's family would not qualify!)

While reports of the traditional family's near-death have been greatly exaggerated, there is no denying the fact that the health of family life in America has clearly suffered during the last quarter-century. Some commentators have been reluctant to characterize recent trends as "decline," arguing instead that families are merely "changing." But sociologist David Poponoe of Rutgers University

points out that family decline is an unambiguous objective reality. Whatever one may think of this decline -- and Poponoe says some may believe the benefits of family decline outweigh its costs -- there is no escaping the fact that the family unit is weaker today than it was a generation ago.

For example, one of the most serious, yet least recognized, trends in family life is the dramatic drop in the amount of time parents spend with their children. Due largely to rises in the number of single-parent families and the number of hours married couples devote to paid work, parents today spend roughly 40 percent less time with their children than did parents a generation ago. In 1965, parents on average spent approximately 30 hours a week with their children; by 1985, parent-child interaction had dropped to just 17 hours a week.

This decline means that parents in the U.S. now spend less time with their children than parents in any other country in the world. According to Harvard psychiatrist Armand Nicholi, only Great Britain rivals the U.S. in parental absence, a fact which he believes Americans should find troubling:

> If one factor influences the character development and emotional stability of a person, it is the quality of the relationship he experiences as a child with <u>both</u> of his parents. Conversely, if people suffering from severe non-organic emotional illness have one experience in common, it is the absence of a parent through death,

divorce, time-demanding job, or absence for other reasons.

Not only are U.S. children receiving less of their parents' attention, but increased time demands on families with children also mean that the pace of life is faster and household schedules are extremely complex. "Increasingly, family schedules are intricate applications of time-motion principles, with everything engineered to the minute and with each piece designed to fall in the right place at the right time," observes Barbara Whitehead of the Institute for American Values. "When a shoe is lost, or a cold car engine fails to turn over, or the baby fills his diaper just after he's been zipped into his snowsuit, or the staff meeting runs late, the whole intricate system can unravel and fall apart."

Not surprisingly, a number of recent polls show that many parents are tired of living on the ragged edge and would like to spend more time with their families (see attached fact sheets). This desire stems both from a concern about the marked decline in family time during the last quarter-century and from a perception that the increasingly treacherous road to adulthood has made parent-child interaction even more important today than it was a generation ago.

Indeed, a recent poll commissioned by the Massachusetts Mutual Insurance Company found that Americans believe the most effective way to strengthen home life is for families to "spend more time together."

The breadth of concern about America's parenting deficit may surprise leaders in government, academia, and the mass media who often view efforts to increase family time -- particularly those that recognize the strengths of the breadwinner-homemaker model -- as an attempt to "turn back the clock" rather than "face the realities" of modern life. Such assumptions fail to recognize that most Americans do not sneer at the past the way many elitists do. In fact, a recent survey by Lawrence Research found that, on balance, a majority of Americans would prefer life in a 1950s suburb to that of a 1990s metropolis -- largely because back then families and communities were stronger and moral values were surer.

This does not mean that Americans want to recreate, in every conceivable way, the family life of a previous era. But it does suggest that policymakers ought not to advocate smug acceptance of our nation's current parenting deficit any more than they advocate smug acceptance of our nation's current trade deficit. If pulling ourselves out of the current economic recession is viewed as progress (rather than "turning back the clock" to a nostalgic era of economic growth), then pulling ourselves out of decades-long family recession should also be viewed as a step forward rather than a step backward.

MADAME CHAIRWOMAN, I believe there are two concrete steps federal policymakers can take to strengthen the American family. First and foremost, policymakers must work to increase the take-home pay of breadwinners with children through an increase in the

per-child tax benefits available to wage-earning families. On this front, I must say that I am very disappointed in the direction the House Ways and Means Committee is taking in the formulation of its tax package. Despite the fact that per-child tax relief enjoys broad bipartisan support (more than 250 House Members have cosponsored Congressman Frank Wolf's bill to increase the tax exemption for children), the Ways and Means tax plan fails to target relief to families, opting instead for the creation of a temporary, adults-only tax credit that would be paid for by a permanent increase in taxes. Not only does the Ways and Means plan fail to target relief to taxpayers with children, but it actually takes a major step backwards by repealing the Young Child Tax Credit that was created as part of the 1990 Budget Act. Clearly, the Committee needs to go back to the drawing board. In so doing, they would do well to embrace Congressman Wolf's proposed increase in the tax exemption for children as well as Senator Joseph Lieberman's proposed expansion of the Young Child Tax Credit.

Second, policymakers should alter existing welfare policies to eliminate biases against marriage. There is growing evidence that the presence of both parents in the home is not only critical to the emotional stability and psychological well-being of children, but also to their long-term economic prospects. As Lawrence Mead of New York University has observed:

> The inequalities that stem from the workplace are now trivial in comparison to those stemming from family structure. What

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> matters for success is less whether your father was rich or poor than whether you knew your father at all.

If the recent moderate left-right convergence on family policy means anything, it should mean redoubled efforts to devise "wedfare" policies that encourage the formation and retention of stable family units.

Finally, MADAME CHAIRWOMAN, let me urge the committee to resist the drumbeat for dramatic increases in spending on so-called "children's programs." In his groundbreaking 1986 study documenting the declining well-being of American adolescents, University of North Carolina sociologist Peter Uhlenberg pointed out that the rise in youth problems between 1960 and 1980 occurred despite considerable "progress" in a number of areas that most self-described "children's advocates" say are critical to youth well-being (spending on government children's programs, better teacher-child ratios, lower child poverty, etc.).

Uhlenberg's study, like so many others, serves as a reminder to us about the limits of government. As Elaine Kamarck and William Galston of the Progressive Policy Institute have written:

> Government cannot, under any set of circumstances, provide the kind of nurturance that children, particularly young children, need. Given all the money in the world, government programs will not be able to instill self-esteem, good study

> habits, or sound moral values in children as effectively as strong families . . . Government will never have the resources or the ability to replace what children lose when they lose supportive families. This suggests that the focus of public policy should be to look for ways to create stable families, not substitute families.

MADAME CHAIRWOMAN, that is sage advise for policymakers tempted to respond to some of our nation's social problems with a new round of increases in spending on children's programs. I hope members of this House will heed it.

Thank you again for the privilege of testifying before your committee, MADAME CHAIRWOMAN. I would be happy to answer any questions that you or other members of the committee may have.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you very much. Congressman Wolf, do you have questions?

Mr. WOLF. Well, I have a question or two on a statement. Let me just commend all the witnesses, particularly Mr. Bauer. I notice the TV cameras are gone, the reporters are pretty much gone; they all left when Jason left. I think Mr. Bauer had as much to say as Jason did, and I think, with all due respect, quite a bit more, although Jason was a good witness for age 14.

I think what you said is exactly right. There is going to be an effort this year to make the family the issue for our politicians, and I guess there isn't much more I can add since you have covered it all.

We don't need more spending. The fact is, the more you spend, the more you have to raise taxes, the more people have to work; the more people have to work, the less time they have with their families. I'm a great fan of Dr. Dobson and I agree when he says, if we want our children to have our values, we have to be with our children. We can't just say "Here are our values on this Bill of Rights, this is what you should believe." Values are not only taught to children, they are caught by children. Moms and dads have to be around their children for them to have their values, and we all want our children to have our values. So, I think your statement is good—the fact is, is what you said, Gary, in your prepared statement.

Mr. BAUER. Actually, I left the prepared statement quite a bit. I'd be happy to try to put down my remarks on paper for you.

Mr. WOLF. If you could, I'd like to send a copy to the Members of the House and say, "We had a hearing the other day, and Gary Bauer from the Family Research Council testified, and here's what he said." If you watch the newsreels or if you ever have the opportunity to go by the Ways and Means Committee when they are marking up a tax bill, they have very few people out there lobbying for the American family. They usually lobby for the railroads, the airlines, or some Japanese company who has hired one of the best law firms downtown. People are not lobbying for the American family. And I just want to commend you, I think it's an excellent statement.

Mr. BAUER. Thank you, Congressman, I appreciate that. I'm flattered.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Congressman McEwen, do you have a question?

Mr. MCEWEN. Thank you, Madam Chair. I strongly agree, and appreciate your testimony, and thank you, Gary, for being here, and what you've said is right on the mark, and we've seen it time, after time, after time.

If in 1950 we had gone in and taken a fourth of the income off the table of the American family, chances are a couple of people would have had to go to work, chances are there would have been less time with the family, chances are there would have been more latchkey children, chances are there would have been more need for day care, chances are educational scores would go down, chances are crime would go up, and chances are liberals would come along and said you need to spend more, create more programs and tax them heavier to correct the dilemma. And what

we've seen is that taxes have increased massively, and it's had an impact on families.

I would like your suggestion as to two things. Number one, two-parent families with children under 16, what percentage of those families with children under 16 do both parents work full-time? Does anyone have that?

Mr. BAUER. I don't have it at my fingertips. There has been a trend up obviously, in recent years, toward both parents working for pay, but nearly half of parents with preschool children still have a mother at home.

And the other interesting thing, Congressman, is if you ask parents who are in the work force, mothers who are in the work force, would they prefer to be working or would they prefer to be home with their children, overwhelmingly they say they would prefer to be home with their children.

It seems to me that public policy ought to make that possible for parents. I can't imagine a worse tragedy than people being driven into the work force against their will in order to meet the burden of high taxes, inflation, and so forth.

Mr. MCEWEN. It is interesting that Eleanor Roosevelt said that her goal was to make it possible that women would come out of the factories and out of the mines and be able to provide for their families, and now we seek an effort to increase the burden and, as they are increasing the burden, say, well, what we need to do is to increase the taxes so that then you would have someone to care for your children.

Do you think that most families would rather have a credit whereby the income of the family would be increased and where they could make their own decision, or do you think we should increase the taxes to provide day care to substitute for the mother?

Mr. BAUER. I don't think there's any doubt about this. Research has continually shown that parents want the ability and the resources to make these decisions themselves.

We see, again, in the inner city, what happens when you take all those resources away from families and put them at the mercy of government institutions that are supposed to care for them. You create a dependent class that has worse problems with their families instead of better.

So, I think it's inevitable that the American people are going to want less bureaucracy and want to be able to keep more of their own income in order to make these kinds of judgments about how to spend their money.

Mr. MCEWEN. I have a report from the Population Issues Research Center, Institute for Policy Research and Evaluation, and I'll just read a sentence. It says, "Child poverty rates would have been a third less in 1988, if the family structures had just remained constant over the past 20 years." And so as we see the destruction of the family, all of these other "concerns" that people want to focus on are a direct result. One need not be a Ph.D. in this to figure it out, one need only walk down the streets of America and workers and parents can explain to them that there is the dilemma, there is the source of the problem and, from that comes all of the poverty and the impact that we hope to correct.

So, rather than trying to mop up the mess, it would be better to turn off the spigot and keep it from overflowing. Do any of you wish to respond?

Dr. HERNANDEZ. You asked for the statistic on the proportion of married-couple families with children under 16 where both parents are working full-time. We have estimates for married couple families with children under 18 and, as I recall, the proportion where both parents are working full-time is 28 percent.

Mr. MCEWEN. Do you have it for preschool or not?

Mr. PLEWES. We have it for children under six, that's correct. We don't have the percentage working full time with us, we just have the labor force participation rate.

Mr. MCEWEN. Okay. See, that significantly distorts, in my mind, because it's hard to find a mother that doesn't do something during the year, whether it be Christmas, or summertime at the pool, or something. And so we get these figures that because she participates somehow or another, that the family of America has obliterated when, of course, we understand—we've seen what the Great Society has delivered in Philadelphia and New York and Washington, but in most of America, in most of America, the family has not yet been destroyed. And it's important that we not bring the "success" of the inner cities of Washington, D.C. to middle America.

Mr. PLEWES. We can provide that for the record, Mr. Congressman, we just don't have it here.

Mr. MCEWEN. Thank you.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Congressman Holloway?

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I want to first compliment Republicans. Oftentimes, we say that we are hardhearted, and we don't care about the family, or we don't care about programs, but by the representation here I think you can plainly see that Republicans care about the family. This panel or committee has basically been totally dominated by Republicans here this morning with tremendous interest on this issue, and I'd like to compliment them.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. If the gentleman would yield, I'd just like to point out, unfortunately, there is a Democratic Caucus on the tax thing, and I think we all think it's very important for them to be there, too, and we had this scheduled beforehand. So, I'm sorry about that.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Well, I'm sure they could slide over if they got ready to sometime during the day, if they had that much interest. So, I will again go back and comment on what I said, there is tremendous interest to be that many. I haven't seen Democrats here in this number at any other hearing before this, so I'll repeat what I said, I compliment the Republicans for being here.

Second, I want to compliment Gary—and, of course, he may get a big head from this—but, basically, we led the battle for tax credits for child care in the package, and I have to say that without the Family Research Council that would have not happened—a simple little bill that was put forward, and their efforts toward it.

I think the whole perspective of the child care bill changed, and I have to compliment your lobbying organization here for making that happen.

Mr. BAUER. Thank you very much, I appreciate that.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. My next question is—and then I want to go over it, but I'm going to finish with Gary—one paragraph in your prepared statement goes back—and I'm just going to read a little part of it—it says in at least one popular version of the numbers game, "traditional family" are defined so narrowly that even Beaver Cleaver's family would not qualify.

I want you to go back and tell me—my parents both still live, are they considered a traditional family? There's a lot of people here that are single that don't have children, that hope to have children. Are they considered a traditional family by the statistics we're putting out?

Mr. BAUER. The folks who use the figure that only 6 percent or only 10 percent of American families are traditional, don't include your parents because their child has moved out of the house. They don't include my family because I have three children instead of two. They wouldn't include Dr. James Dobson's family because his children have moved and his wife volunteers, and sometimes is paid for her work with a number of organizations.

The alternative lifestyles lobby has so narrowly defined what a traditional family is that almost no one fits into it and, again, I think it gives a terribly wrong impression to the American people.

I've seen educational officials in the last couple of months, citing these figures that only 6 percent of American families are traditional, to justify doing all sorts of things in the classroom, including passing out condoms. And I think it's really a twisting of the public policy process to play around with the figures this way. As I mentioned earlier, most families, most Americans remain traditional in their goals and their desires.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Thank you. I just hope that your statement will be made a little more available, and Congressman Wolf's willingness to do that will lead us because I do believe that America is still a country of families and traditional families. I wouldn't fit in that category because I have four children, but—you know, I can—and I won't say that I came up in a very poor home, but my parents cared about us, and I think it's exemplified in the successes of us children. The seven of us are all still married to the same husband and wife, and I think that does bear into this play, and I think somehow as a government we've got to play a bigger role in saying what's right for America, not what America is trying to dream of what we can do for everybody.

I have to quote some people that probably wouldn't be, to say we've got too many people riding in the wagon and not enough people pulling the wagon. So, I think that two-family parents who do not depend on programs are very important.

The next question I'd like to ask is to Mr. Hernandez, and basically, I think, when we're determining income of families from government monies—I think you made the statement in your testimony but, anyway—what exactly do we determine, with welfare families or families who receive from government, what exactly is determined to consider whether they are in the poverty level or not? Do we not leave out some of the money that government pays to them?

Dr. HERNANDEZ. The official poverty threshold includes sources of cash income, but it does not include non-cash sources of income,

so it does not include food stamps, it does not include health insurance provided by the government or through the private sector. It does include sources of cash income that are available, provided by the government or from other sources, such as wages and salaries, self-employment income, pensions, and so on.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. So one of my brothers who makes $30,000 a year and pays for his food and pays for everything else, is considered making $30,000, but someone who is dependent on government who gets these benefits, same benefits, same percentage, any way we want to figure it, is not considered when we are determining eligibility for other things and all?

Dr. HERNANDEZ. That's how the official poverty threshold is calculated.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Who determines that?

Dr. HERNANDEZ. The Office of Management and Budget, OMB, established the official definition of poverty.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. No, we don't control that, Mr. Holloway.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Well, we probably should. I think I saw a bill go forward that we did try to change it in, and I think that we do need a legislative bill that goes forward that we do show that in, because I believe that that's part of all the figures we keep throwing out of more and more people going into poverty—that figure will change drastically if we consider that money. That's money that's coming into that family any way you want to look at it. They may be trading it in and buying lottery tickets with it, but that's wrong, and the fact that we have to say that that's money coming into the family, and these bogus figures about the numbers that keep falling into poverty are wrong because that person is getting a direct income. It may be in the form of food, but I pay for food every day and I consider it in my budget.

So, I think that's a figure that somehow we need to clarify and change, and I want to close with one thing, and that's on the concept Mr. Wolf asked for the hearing with the directors of movies and all. I quote one movie that I watched, and I watched a little bit of it and it was terrible. It was a family, a beautiful movie that could have been, and I think it was "Vacation." But the vulgarity had no role in that movie whatsoever. I mean, it was about a family on vacation. I turned it off and tried to prevent my kids from watching because it was simply a movie that should have been a PG, that was a beautiful movie about a family, has to have all that vulgarity in it. Now, what is it? It had no place in this movie.

So, I would call for us to have that hearing on this committee as well, because I think that the TV and movies today plays a tremendous role in where we go as families, but thank God for groups like yours, Gary, that we do have hope for this country. Thank you.

Mr. BAUER. Thank you, Congressman.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Congressman Riggs?

Mr. RIGGS. Thank you, Madam Chair, and good morning—now good afternoon—to the witnesses. To the distinguished demographers—how's that for alliteration—I would just like to know if your opinions on two underlying causal factors that I think would tend to prove or disprove some of the census and demographic data

that you've shared with us today, and that is the increase in divorce in modern day society, American society, and also, actually, the expansion of the welfare society, is there a correlation between expanding the welfare of the Great Society program, the safety net, if you will, and all the perverse incentives that are contained in that program, and the fact that many times that actually encourages, reinforces, the cycle of welfare dependency, in some of the statistical data that you've shared with us today. So, if you could address those two things, and then I'm going to ask Gary Bauer to respond to them as well, divorce and the welfare system.

Dr. HERNANDEZ. Well, a simple look at the divorce rate and the proportion of families where there is a divorced mother, shows that there are two kinds of demographic components that account for the rise in one-parent families. One is the increase in divorce and the other is out-of-wedlock childbearing.

When you move to factors behind those, what's causing the increase in divorce or what's causing the increase in out-of-wedlock childbirth—that's not something the Census Bureau specifically looked at in terms of causal analysis. Our role is essentially to look at the nature of these trends and try to understand them in a broad sense, but not to conduct a detailed causal analysis. There's a lot of people that study these statistics that you might want to talk to.

Mr. RIGGS. I appreciate that, and before I turn to Mr. Plewes, let me just ask you, though, my assumption is that there has been a dramatic increase in the incidence of divorce in our society over the last two decades, is that correct?

Dr. HERNANDEZ. The divorce rate approximately doubled between the mid 1960's and the late 1970's. This increase was, in a sense, out of trend, but taking a longer historical perspective, divorce has been rising in the U.S. for about 130 years. There was a sharper increase for a period of about 15 years, but in the historical context, this increase is part of a long-run trend in the U.S.

Mr. RIGGS. So in terms of the fragmentation of the American nuclear family, that concept as we know it, I would dare suggest that divorce is probably the most prevalent reason for that. But let me ask Mr. Plewes his response to my question.

Mr. PLEWES. I can't add too much to that. Certainly, divorce has increased the number of single-parent families. The single-parent family, as we've heard earlier, has great problems in terms of income, and in terms of labor force participation. Moreover, when these parents are able to participate in the labor market, they don't find jobs as readily as others do because they frequently lack the skills and experience needed. And, finally, their spending patterns are quite different. They have to spend a larger proportion of what they do earn than two-parent families on such things as housing, medical, and child care, and there is less left over for quality of life kinds of things.

Mr. RIGGS. Gary Bauer, thank you for your outspoken advocacy on behalf of American families. I am curious as to your reaction regarding the dramatic increase in divorce in American society, the expansion of the welfare system, which at the same time, I think, has worked to the detriment of American families.

Mr. BAUER. Well, you're absolutely right. I think there's both some bad news and some good news on this subject. Divorce has skyrocketed. The country, as you know, made a major reform, so-called, a number of years ago, with no-fault divorce. And I think now we've got a lot of research that shows what the outcome of that was. No-fault divorce has been an absolute disaster for women and children. After a typical divorce, the income of a husband or the man in the marriage skyrockets. The income of the mother and the children plummets. We're all aware of the problems with collecting support, et cetera, after divorces.

The good news about all this, however—and I think the other gentleman will back this up—is that the divorce statistics seem to have peaked, I believe, around 1980, and there seems to be some indication that they are now trending down.

The other good news is that even after divorce, most men and women look for someone else to love and spend their lives with. There's a hunger among the American people, there always has been and I suspect there always will be, to find somebody to be faithful to and to spend their lives with. And even after a failed marriage, husbands and wives try to recreate a stable household, and I think that shows the everlasting commitment to family and the values of hearth-and-home in this country even in an era where divorce is a reality.

Mr. RIGGS. Appreciate that. Also, another perception I'd just like to share with my fellow colleagues and the audience this morning is that during the '80s we very definitely saw a tremendous emphasis on consumption and materialism, at least that's my perception and I'm curious as to your opinion as to the effect of that emphasis on consumption, that glorification of materialism, on the American family.

Mr. BAUER. I think there has been a trend, not just in the '80s, but certainly in modern life generally, toward more possessions, toward measuring success by income levels, the size of your home, whether you've got a Volvo sitting in your driveway or not.

I think there are some signs that there is some re-evaluation going on in that regard, that Americans are beginning to think a little bit more about what really matters to them. I think that children have been hurt by some of these trends.

You have on the one hand the statistics that are so clear about children who only have one parent, or inner city children that often are abandoned and don't have the attention of parents but, you know, an upper middle class child or a child living in the suburbs who has two parents that are working 60-hours-a-week in high power jobs also, in some ways, finds himself neglected and without the kind of parental guidance that he needs. And I think it would be a very healthy thing if our society would re-evaluate and perhaps come to the realization that the best things in the country can't necessarily be measured by the gross national product.

Nobody measures how many times a day a child is hugged, how many dinners families gather around to share problems and to talk about issues with, how many times a parent kneels in prayer at nighttime with a child. We don't measure those things but, arguably, they are the most important things that happen in any socie-

ty, and a little bit more focus on those instead of on purely GNP would probably be a very healthy thing.

Mr. RIGGS. So that is to say that middle-class and upper-middle class families, without looking to the Federal Government for any specific economic growth or tax incentives, have it within their power to really change their emphasis or change their priorities and begin to re-emphasize families and communities more often.

Mr. BAUER. I don't want to sound anti-economic growth. The fact that 18 million new jobs were created in the '80s was a fantastic thing for the American family. Families that can land those jobs and bring in that money can provide for their children, but I think any society needs balance, and certainly our society has been very much a consumer society that emphasizes possessions and often shortchanges some of these other values that we're talking about.

Mr. RIGGS. And I think, as a whole, we've wandered away from those traditional values of marital commitment and families as well.

I'm also—a final question—intrigued by your concept of, I think you called it, welfare policies, which you didn't elaborate on in your statement. Could you just give us a quick thumbnail sketch of what you're talking about there?

Mr. BAUER. Well, as you know, there's a lot of statistical evidence now that when you set up a welfare system, with the best of intentions, and in that system you reward certain types of behavior and you penalize other types of behavior, that it shouldn't be a surprise when you get more of the behavior you reward and less of the behavior you penalize.

In the inner city, we have penalized families that form, and we've rewarded families that failed to form. We've rewarded promiscuity. We've rewarded out-of-wedlock births. We've penalized families that make those decisions which historically we know lead to success and lead to escaping poverty.

There's a lot going on at the state level now, to try to get to this issue—reforms taking place in a number of states. Welfare is run at the state level, but I sure would be happy if the national government would have a debate over this, I think the American people are ready for it.

Mr. RIGGS. Thank you very much.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Congressman Bilirakis?

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is sort of similar to so many subjects—virtually, maybe, every subject that we have, every issue that we have to deal with up here in the Congress, and that is that we all seem to have the same objective. The bottom line is basically the same. It's always the case of how do you get there, and that's where I think an awful lot of differences arise.

All of the witnesses here and the statistics that we've heard basically bear out the comments that children are worse off today than they have been over the last number of decades, and we've got to admit that. And some of us do support some of these programs. I supported the child care legislation. But we've got to admit, because we see these lines continue to climb, that dollars in and by themselves is just plainly not the answer.

Gary made the comment—and I'm paraphrasing—someone has to make a child the most important ingredient in his or her life,

the most important person, or ingredient, whatever the proper word that you use there is synonymous, I should think. And there isn't any bit of legislation from the Congress of the United States that can do that, with the exception of the fact that we want to maybe give the family more choice and, again, those words were used, but in terms of having more dollars in their paycheck so that conceivably both parents would not have to go to work.

TV programs, a point was made of that. I think we all would agree that our children really are at the stage—I mean, adults—look at the crime rates and murder rates and things of that nature—adults are basically led by enough, to a very large degree, by what we see on television.

Is there a role for government in that, on constitutionality, versus constitutionality? I don't know. I do know this, that it's not up to me to decide what the heck is constitutional or unconstitutional, it's up to me to decide what legislation might be necessary to change things, and let the courts decide whether it's unconstitutional or not.

And, Madam Chair, I commend you for this hearing because these are all things I suppose we've all thought about and we've all known, but maybe we need something like this in order to bring more attention to it all.

I would hope that if we all really care about the bottom line, which is children and families, that we'll get together and toss bipartisanship aside and decide to address that bottom line in ways more than just merely throwing dollars at the problem, because the lines, as I said before, continue to go up—poverty, and homeless, and everything else, hunger, just continue to rise, no matter how many billions we keep throwing at it.

Shouldn't we realize that maybe we're doing something wrong, and take a look at alternative routes? I should think so. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you very much. I wanted to ask the statisticians something I heard this weekend, and maybe it's not in the purview, but they said we were the industrialized nation, the only industrialized nation with this high a percentage of women with children under age 1 in the work force, or we have the highest percentage. Do you happen to know about that? Obviously, I know you collect data on the U.S., so I haven't—and I don't know where they got that, but they were looking at the other industrialized countries such as Canada, Europe, and so forth, and said the under 1—your statistics don't go to under 1 then?

Mr. PLEWES. Yes, they do. As I testified, in 1991, a little over half the mothers with children under 1 were in the labor force. We have that figure for the United States, but we don't have it here for the other countries. We can check that for the record, if you'd like.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. It was interesting because they have new research showing that child care didn't appear to hurt children over 1 if it was quality, but under 1, infant care, they were very concerned about, and those were two numbers. So, I don't quite know what the answer to that is, but I think that's a trend line that troubles me.

As statisticians, I suppose you don't want to make predictions. I mean, hopefully the divorce thing that has tapered off, but the single birth seems to be going up, is that correct?

Dr. HERNANDEZ. That is correct. Divorce has declined slightly since the late '70s. But there have been no large changes in one direction or another since the late 1970s. The rate of out-of-wedlock childbearing is continuing to increase.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. But it is still going up, the increase is pretty high.

Gary, let me say, I hear—I'm not quite sure what I'm hearing. I hear all this confrontation about traditional family. I thought the bottom line is we're trying to help all families, and just the real debate is that families are much more diverse than they've been in the past, which I think everybody would agree to, but aren't we still, though, trying to help all families?

Mr. BAUER. Right. Well, I think we are trying to help all families, but I believe, Madam Chairwoman, that public policy ought to also try to create or create conditions to the extent that it can, that allows more people to experience an intact family unit. In other words, we shouldn't look at the trends and assume that it's inevitable that more and more of our children will be born into single-parent households.

We ought to look at the trends and ask ourselves "Why is that happening?" We know it's a problem. We know it's going to be bad, generally speaking, for those kids. Is there anything we can do in public policy, welfare, other changes, that will make it less likely that a child is going to be born with those kinds of odds stacked against him?

And I think what some people hear is a willingness to accept that situation and assume it's inevitable and assume that it will continue to grow, and just come to grips with it. I think we need to swim against that tide and make it possible ultimately in this country, for as many children as possible to experience the love of a mother and a father.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. I guess I'm puzzled because I don't think anybody really wants to accept that. I look at the states, and the only state I know that's really tackled it head-on is maybe Hawaii, where they put their Healthy Start program out and tried to interface with every family that looks like it could be in real trouble, as abusers or other things, and their eight years of statistics show that they haven't had one incident of child abuse among those families. In other words, what they found is that families wanted to be successful and, by helping them, they really could be.

And I know in 1988 we passed the Welfare Reform Act where we were really trying to get people job skills and get them their dignity back because the very interesting thing about welfare is that even the people on welfare hate welfare. I mean, nobody likes it. It's a rotten system. And that seems to have got caught up in the economic downturn.

I know in my State the problem is you can't find $7-an-hour jobs with benefits for people coming out of the program because you can't even find them for college students. So, that kind of stalls that. But your saying that we shouldn't do anything about spending, I'm a little puzzled by that because, to me, the one program I

thought—or the two programs, at least, that I thought everyone agreed on was Head Start and vaccinations. And while we don't like single-parent births, we do know that we can have children healthier and more ready to learn and they fit into the President's educational goals that was talked about earlier by the pollsters.

So, it's kind of sad to me that we've not kept that commitment. Actually, our spending on children as a percentage of the federal budget has been declining in the '80s on programs like vaccines and such.

Mr. BAUER. Well, I will quickly concede that there are areas where extra dollars will make sense. I mentioned Title XX, for example. I think it would make sense to spend more dollars in the abstinence area. I think in the vaccination area more dollars would help.

On Head Start, my experience has been, when I was at the Department of Education and looked at that program, that while it works better than many federal programs, that's not saying much. In other words, the research shows some improvement in children in head start in the initial years, but that improvement quickly disappears as they get older.

And I think, again, if you match up poor performance by children in education and other areas, there's a very strong link between those problems and single-parent households, and the statistics are overwhelming on almost all these issues—youth suicide, youth homicide, dropout rate, drug addiction, venereal disease, teenage pregnancy. The major factor that remains constant is that the number of children from single-parent families experience these problems at much higher levels, and I don't believe that any amount of spending will make up the problem for them. I think what we need to do is figure out a way to reinforce the notion that children need two-parent families.

Senator Rockefeller pointed out that on his commission he got in an argument with the liberals because he wanted to say in the commission report, that two-parent families were the goal, it's what we should aim for, it's what we should hope that our children experience, and people wanted to argue with him about that. They thought that somehow he was insulting other lifestyles.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. I think as legislators we're frustrated as how you mandate that, and I must say that Congresswomen have, for the entire 20 years I've been here, been beating on the Federal Government, no matter which administration was in power, to have much stronger child support enforcement, which I think would certainly help a lot of that, and do it. I think we ought to nationalize that. I think it ought to be at the federal level. You know, I'm ready to march on all of those things. But everybody's got reasons for why they don't want to do it.

Mr. BAUER. Madam Chair, let me say, you have a tremendous following among people that care about family issues, and you particularly have a tremendous following among young women who see you as a role model.

I think the fact that if you just took time to go into the inner city, talk to young women, and urge them not to make the mistake of forming single-family households, that that would be a tremendous step forward.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. May I just tell you a story about what I heard last week when we did that, about single-parent kids and so forth. But let me tell you what they said, and I still have not quite recovered from this.

I said to these young women, "Why are you having babies? Why aren't you getting your degree?" And they said, "You don't understand. We don't want to have to report to dad. We never want to see the dad. We don't even want to hear about family planning. We purposely wanted to have these children, to get out of the awful family situation we're in, number one, and number two, we think our lives are going to be much better because we are not going to deal with the dad, and what happened in our family was the dad was forced to marry the mom and it's been an awful family."

I am horrified to think in 1992, a young woman in this country thinks her only out of a bad situation at 13 or 14, is to get pregnant and start her own family and wants nothing to do with the dad and resents the Federal Government asking for the paternity or any of that. Believe me, my hair stood on end as I listened to that.

Now, you ask why I don't like Title XX. Because the very department that ran it had an inhouse audit saying it didn't work and they ought to relook at it. You start out saying cut spending, but you say this is spending we like. We've been spending on Title XX for ten years, and we haven't gotten there.

Now, the goals are the same. That doesn't mean that I'm against abstinence, but it means that if the department running the program has questions about their not getting there, hadn't we better look at it, just like you're saying we ought to look at Head Start and maybe there's something we can do to make it better. But let's not get into the confrontation thing because, again, I think we have got to look at this as a competitiveness issue and where we're going and how we help all families, and I think that's just the absolute bottom line, and we haven't spent enough time talking about it in Washington. It's not a power issue.

Mr. BAUER. Someone said "there are lies, damn lies, and statistics." I've got a number of studies that show that Title XX is working very well, and I think you need to realize that there's been a great hostility in the bureaucracy, to a program that's value-based. Washington, generally speaking, has not been sympathetic to programs that talk about values.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. But we want results-based, and I think values are hard to quantify, but results are that unfortunately single-parenthood is increasing——

Mr. BAUER. Yes, it is, but I would venture to say to you that the children, or the young women that you talked to, have not had a major course in abstinence. If they are in a large city in America, those programs aren't usually emphasizing—in fact, what's happening in the inner city is the condom approach, which we are both very familiar with and which I can guarantee you will fail. And I think the interviews with these young women indicate that it will fail. They're not having the babies by accident.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. No, that's exactly right, and there's something wrong that we're not giving them a better view. I think the AAUW came out with their study this week, on young women

and their views of what's happening in education, and that reinforces it.

So, I would hope that we don't get into these confrontational things. I think what we are really trying to do here is find out how we really try to help all of America's families, and I have yet to meet any parent anywhere, who doesn't want their child to do better than they did, in school and in all of these things, and some just don't have the skills.

Mr. BAUER. We're anxious to work with you. I think the family is important enough that when you think I'm doing something that's bad policy, you ought to really nail me to the wall, and occasionally we'll suggest things to you that might be better.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Congressman Wolf had one more thing.

Mr. MCEWEN. Madam Chair——

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. We do have another whole panel, I hope you all realize this. Yes.

Mr. MCEWEN. I would just like to tag along on what you just said because I have discovered in my lifetime, that when people refuse to look at something and dismiss it, that they miss a great deal. And for a long time, we have said that young girls would not have babies just for the welfare money, and we recently had hearings on the Commission on Hunger in my congressional district, which is the poorest district in Ohio, and precisely what you encountered, Madam Chairwoman, is precisely the case. From many, many, many of the community action workers, from many of the people at Planned Parenthood, from many of the people that the counselors in the schools, very simply, a young frustrated adolescent sees the only way out of this chaos in which the parents in poverty, usually unemployed and uneducated, often alcohol or other abuse, and this young girl sees as her only way to shortcircuit this is to become a mother. And with that she gets her own apartment, she gets her own payment, and she goes to the basketball games on Friday night with her own live teddy bear and is the hero. And anyone who refuses to acknowledge that and says "You can't tell me"—I've heard it 10,000 times on the Floor, and with great bluster, from some multimillionaire Member of Congress from a silk stocking district—"You can't tell me anyone is going to have a child, in this day and age, for $215 a month," as though that means anything.

The truth of the matter is that what you've cited is what is happening. And the unwillingness of philosophers and ivory tower statisticians to acknowledge it does not do our nation or these young girls any benefit. And I just wanted to add that before Frank goes on to his next question.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. And one of the things that I think the demographers are going to pick up, that concerns me a lot, as we now start downscaling the military very tremendously, we lose a place for 18-year-olds to go, that don't feel mature or ready for college, and what is that going to do to the whole—it's kind of a frightening picture as to what that is going to do to that whole thing. And I obviously realize you're not in the thing of predicting, but my guess is, when you come back here five years from now, we will have seen what happens as we cut back the intake into the services by 25 to 50 percent.

Congressman Wolf?

Mr. WOLF. I'll yield in just a moment, but I just want to ask, Dr. Hernandez, if you will submit for the record and get a copy to my office an explanation of the often heard statement that 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. A lot of people say that's not an exact figure because it depends on how you interpret it. So, if you could give me an interpretation of how you reached that figure, and I will just yield to Clyde.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. I'll be very brief because I know this panel has been here a long time, but during the conversation the fact that divorces had peaked came up. At what year did you all decide it peaked?

Dr. HERNANDEZ. The divorce rate peaked in the late 1970s.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. And can any one of the three of you give me a reason or to predict why it peaked, or why we're going to the other direction? Was it due to society or what reason it would turn around?

Dr. HERNANDEZ. That is a very complicated and difficult question to answer.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Gary, you all do a lot of research, do you have any idea?

Mr. BAUER. I don't think the research is exactly clear. I suspect that as divorce went up and other families saw the wreckage after those divorces, more people began to think about whether that really was an alternative they wanted to subject their own families to.

There's also been a movement in the last ten years to a more traditional way of thinking about these things, and I think it's beginning to show up in the statistics.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. I'm sure we wouldn't say that due to the administration during the '80s it might have——

Mr. BAUER. It might seem a little self-serving if I suggested that, since I served in that administration.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Thank you very much, I agree.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Okay. Thank you very much. I am sure that the pollsters and anyone would be happy to accept questions for the record if we have them, and I apologize for keeping you so long. Thank you, and we really appreciate the light you've shed.

To our final panel, who have been absolute saints in hanging in there, we welcome them. The final panel is made up of David Blankenhorn, who is the President for the Institute for American Values; Robert Rector, who is the Policy Analyst for Family and Welfare Issues for the Heritage Foundation; Judith Weitz, who is KIDS COUNT Coordinator for the Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington, and Greg Duncan, who is the Program Director for the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

We welcome all of you, and we thank you for your long duration. As you can tell, this is an issue that people care about, have strong feelings about, and we probably never spend quite enough time on.

Mr. Blankenhorn, let us start with you. We have put your statement in the record, so have at it, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF DAVID BLANKENHORN, PRESIDENT, INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN VALUES, NEW YORK, NY

Mr. BLANKENHORN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thank you also, Mr. Wolf, for your suggestion that I devote my testimony today to several recent public opinion polls regarding family and child well being in the United States. In the interest of time, I'll summarize from my submitted testimony.

I have some criticisms to make. I hope they are not too confrontational, but I do have a few criticisms to make of some of the public opinion polls that you are considering today. Let me summarize briefly by saying that I have observed a tendency sometimes to use public opinion polls not primarily as scientific inquiries into American beliefs and values, but more as tactical weapons in the service of partisan agendas. I know that's a big thing to say, but play a little thought experiment here.

Imagine that, apart from any opinion poll findings, you personally held three main views about child well being in the United States. One, that child well being is declining, primarily due to declining economic conditions; second, that child well being could be improved, primarily by increased government funding for children's programs; and, third, that because of these facts, children's issues are emerging as a potent new force in national politics.

Let me add that these views constitute, in my view, much of the conventional wisdom today of what might be called the "official family debate," that is, the elite discussion of family issues that is dominated by experts, advocates and opinion leaders in politics, the media, think tanks, and the universities.

It is not, by the way, the viewpoint of much of the discussion I've heard today, not the views that were expressed by Senator Rockefeller when he was reporting on his poll. But if you will grant me the premise that these views constitute much of the Washington discussion, and if you will grant me the premise that they are some of the animating concerns of the public opinion surveys that you are hearing about today, let me just ask you to perform this thought experiment with me.

Suppose that you wanted to demonstrate that these views were not yours alone but were also, in fact, shared by the majority of Americans. There really is a fairly simple way for you to do it, and let me just walk you through three quick questions.

Here is what you should ask to a representative sample of Americans. Question number one: "A lot of people in America say that the economy is in trouble, and that this is having an impact on families and their children. I am going to read you a list of statements describing some of the ways that people think the declining economy has had the greatest impact on children." Then you read the list, which consists of terrible things that could happen when families and children don't have enough resources. Then you ask the respondents to rank them in order of importance.

Then you ask question number two: "Now I'm going to read you a list of measures that some people have said might be taken to relieve the burden on children and their families in these tough economic times." Then you read the list of a number of good-sound-

ing government programs, and you ask the respondents to rank these also in their order of preference.

Here is what will happen. It is absolutely impossible for the answers to these questions to produce anything other than data that will put the American people solidly on record in support of your three core ideas. No respondent to these questions, for example, could fail to agree that declining child well being in our nation is essentially a matter of economic hard times, since that proposition is presented to the respondent not as an option to embrace or reject, but rather as the factual assumption upon which the entire poll is based.

Similarly, no respondent can avoid voicing support for more government programs to help children. To answer the question is to voice support for more programs, since the question permits no other alternatives.

On the issue of children's programs as a potent new electoral issue, here is the question to ask. Read to people the following list of nine priorities for their tax dollars: One, providing national health insurance; two, military spending; three, lower taxes; four, aid to foreign countries; five, guarantee all children health care, quality education, safe neighborhoods, and economic security; six, clean the environment; seven, protecting social security; eight, fight crime and drugs; nine, job training and economic development. Then you ask the respondents to rank these in order of importance.

Well, which one would you pick of those nine? I know that in my case I would certainly choose the priority of children, and I think you would, too, and for exactly the same reason. For if I pick the priority of children, I really get to pick four priorities instead of one, and not just any old priorities. I get to pick—indeed, I get to guarantee—health care, quality education, safe neighborhoods and economic security, arguably the four most urgent domestic issues of our day, all for the price of picking just that one priority labeled children. None of the other answers are even remotely as comprehensive or as guaranteed as this one. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that when Americans are in fact presented with this list, the children's priority easily beats out other entries such as "aid to foreign countries," or "job training and economic development."

Now, go back to your core beliefs. You have accomplished your mission. These questions will do it. The American people are on record as agreeing with you. A number of the recent survey summaries that have been put out therefore can say things like "voters want to make children a top priority for their tax dollars" and "Candidates for public office this year had better do their homework on children's issues before they court the voters" and "there is a growing consensus that government should take action on behalf of children, reordering spending priorities and directing more tax revenues into children's programs." This is how the phenomenon works.

Now, I really do believe that this would be unobjectionable—indeed, it might even constitute a service to the nation—if these recent poll findings were, in fact, an accurate barometer of American beliefs and values on the subject of child well being. But they are not an accurate barometer. I would submit that they are dra-

matically misleading—not just incomplete, not just inaccurate in some methodological or technical sense, but fundamentally wrong in that they create a deeply distorted picture of American values and American family life.

Let's return for a moment to the notion of core beliefs. Do Americans, most Americans, naturally link declining child well being to declining economic conditions? They do not.

Do most Americans believe that real progress for children depends primarily on the creation and expansion of government programs to help children? They do not.

Do most Americans view children's programs as an important electoral issue? They do not.

In fact,—and here I'm relying upon the National Commission on Children's poll which you've heard about, the Mass Mutual Survey of Family Values, and other work that we've done in our own organization—Americans are much more likely to believe that real progress for children depends not on the state of the economy, but on the state of the culture. They are much more likely to believe that progress for children depends less on political change than it does on cultural change; less on changes in government programs or government officials than it does on changes in values, especially the behavior and attitudes and parents.

If you ask Americans, "Is it getting harder to be a child today," they will tell you: yes, it is. And if you ask them to order some economic priorities, they will do that, too. But if you simply ask them "Why do you think it is getting harder to be a child today," here are the kinds of answers that you will hear. "It's not safe anymore to let children go out and play." "Parents need to spend more time with their children." "Television is a bad influence." "There's too much premarital sex and too many babies being born to unmarried boys and girls." "The divorce rate is too high." "Drugs can ruin a child's life." "Children today are not being taught the difference between right and wrong."

These types of answers, so common, so obvious, so familiar to anyone who is not tone deaf to our culture, are conspicuously absent, however, from the opinion surveys that I'm citing and which you are considering today.

They are absent, not because Americans have ceased to hold these views, but rather because the polls do not permit the expression or measurement of these views. They are absent, in short, because these polls prescribe a relationship between child well being and government programs, while excluding any consideration of the relationship between child well being and cultural values. But to ignore the role of cultural values is to ignore what most Americans believe to be the main issue, the heart of the entire matter.

When the subject is child well being, the language of choice for most Americans is the language of culture, the language of right and wrong, of parental responsibility, and of the difficulty of being a good parent today in a culture that has grown unfriendly to children and families.

If you exclude these concerns, all that is left is the language of these polls—the official language of insider politics and legislative analysis. What you have excluded, in short, is the everyday lan-

guage of the kitchen table and the real life concerns of American families.

Now, what should we make of this fact? My conclusion is—and here I will end—that in the area of child well being, cultural change is simply the heart of the matter. It is where the rubber hits the road. It is where real social change either happens or does not happen.

The American people, by and large, are skeptical of purely programmatic remedies to children's problems not because they fear social change, but rather because they demand it; not because government programs cost too much, but because they cost and do too little; not because they go too far, but frequently because they do not go very far at all.

And maybe we ought to listen to this message. Maybe we ought take seriously the priorities of the kitchen table. Let me list just five: Parental time with children, divorce, unwed parenthood, the role of fathers, and safe places for children to play. And you have heard about others from previous testimony.

In each area, strong political leadership could foster important social changes. In short, perhaps we can truly improve child well being in our nation by listening to the cultural conversation at the kitchen table, rather than dismissing it as irrelevant to the serious business of Washington politics. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of David Blankenhorn follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID BLANKENHORN, PRESIDENT, INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN VALUES, NEW YORK, NY

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for the opportunity to be here today. And thank you, Mr. Wolf, for your interest in our work at the Institute for American Values and for your request that I devote my testimony today to the subject of several new public opinion polls regarding family and child well-being in the United States.

Let me be blunt in my criticism. Over the past several years, I have observed a disturbing phenomenon in our legislative process: a growing tendency to use public opinion surveys, not primarily as scientific inquiries into American beliefs and values, but more as tactical weapons in the service of partisan agendas. It is this problem -- what it is, why it is harmful, and what can be done about it -- that I wish to discuss with you today.

Think of the problem as the difference between bottom-up polling and trickle-down polling. In bottom-up polling, we seek to discover what people believe. In trickle-down polling, opinion is pre-determined at the top by someone or some group, run through a polling process for refinement and verification, and then disseminated downward through the announcement of survey findings. It becomes less a tool of inquiry, therefore, than a tool of persuasion. Its purpose is less to measure public opinion than to influence elite media and political opinion.

What results, in policy terms, is an odd inversion of the traditional process. Instead of asking whether our policy agenda conforms to public opinion, we are in the curious position of misinforming ourselves about public opinion in order to advance our policy agenda. In political terms, the result is frustrated voters, who conclude -- properly, based on this evidence -- that politicians simply do not understand or care about their real concerns.

Of course, the final result, quite alarming in a democracy, is the corruption of political discourse. For what ultimately emerges is a growing gap between what Americans believe and what policymakers are told that Americans believe -- a growing distance, in short, between elite opinion and public opinion, between the witness table and the kitchen table.

To understand the nature of this problem, try a thought experiment. Imagine that, apart from any opinion poll findings, your personal philosophy of child well-being today consisted of three basic ideas:

- **first**, that child well-being is declining, primarily due to declining economic conditions;

- **second**, that child well-being can be improved, primarily by increasing government funding for children's programs; and

- **third**, that because of these facts, children's issues are emerging as a potent new force in national electoral politics.

These three core beliefs, in my view, constitute the defining themes, the conceptual framework, of much of our recent public discourse on family issues. They embody, in short, the conventional wisdom of what might be termed the official family debate -- the elite discussion of family issues that is dominated by experts, advocates, and opinion leaders in politics, the media, the think tanks, and the universities.

Now as a proponent of these views, suppose that you would like to demonstrate that you are not alone. Suppose you wish to demonstrate that large majorities of American voters also believe in the truth of these propositions.

No problem. You have at your disposal a fool-proof formula for success. To make you case, begin by posing the following question to a representative sample of Americans:

> *"A lot of people in America say that the economy is in trouble, and that this is having an impact on families and their children. I'm going to read you a list of statements describing some of the ways that people think the declining economy has had the greatest impact on children. Please listen as I read the list..."*

Then read the list, which consists of a number of bad-sounding things that can happen to children when their parents don't have enough income or support services. Ask the respondents to rank these problems in order of importance.

Here is the second question you could ask:

> *"Now I'm going to read you a list of measures that some people have said might be taken to relieve the burden on children and their families in these tough economic times. Please listen as I read the list..."*

Then read the list, which consists of a number of good-sounding government programs and initiatives. Ask the respondents to rank these proposed solutions in order of importance.

It is absolutely impossible for these questions to produce anything other than answers that will put the American people solidly on record in support of your core philosophy. No respondent to these questions, for example, can fail to agree that declining child well-being is essentially a matter of economic hard times, since that proposition is

presented to the respondent not as an option to embrace or reject, but rather as the factual assumption upon which the entire poll is based. Similarly, no respondent can avoid voicing support for more government programs to help children. To answer the question is to support more government action, since the question permits no other alternatives.

On the issue of children's programs as a potent electoral issue, here is the question to ask. Read to people the following list of nine possible priorities for their tax dollars:

1. provide national health insurance
2. military spending
3. lower taxes
4. aid to foreign countries
5. guarantee all children health care, quality education, safe neighborhoods, and economic security
6. clean the environment
7. protecting Social Security
8. fight crime and drugs
9. job training and economic development

Ask the respondents to rank these government priorities in order of importance. Which would you pick as number one? Which do you think mos. Americans would pick? Which do you think would appear most frequently in a list of top three priorities?

I know that, in my own case, I would certainly pick the priority of children. I believe that you would, too, and for the same reason. For if I pick the priority of children, I really get to pick four priorities for the price of one. And not just any old priorities. I get to pick (indeed, I get to **guarantee**) health care, quality education, safe neighborhoods, and economic security -- arguably the four most urgent domestic issues of our day -- all for the price of picking just that one priority labeled children. None of the other possible answers are even remotely as comprehensive or as "guaranteed" as this one. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that when Americans are in fact presented with this list, the children's priority easily beats out other entries such as "aid to foreign countries" or "job training and economic development."

Return now to your goal of finding public support for your three basic beliefs. You have accomplished your mission. The American people now agree with you. Posing these questions in this manner will inevitably yield answers which, taken together, will prove that your core philosophy does not simply reflect the values of a few people or organizations, but also the strongly held values of the American people.

Now stop the thought experiment. The questions I just cited comprise the substantive basis of two new polls on child well-being which are being presented as evidence to this Committee today. Here are key excerpts from the summaries of these polls. See if the core themes sound familiar.

Headline: *"Deteriorating economy biggest threat to kids' basic needs."*

"There is a growing national consensus that government should take action on behalf of children, reordering spending priorities and directing more existing tax revenues into children's programs."

"Voters want to make children a top priority for their tax dollars..."

"Candidates for public office this year had better do their homework on children's issues before they court the voters..."

The phenomenon that I have just described would be unobjectionable -- indeed, it would probably constitute a service to the nation -- if these recent poll findings, despite the goals and methodologies, were in fact an accurate barometer of American beliefs and values on the subject of family and child well-being. But here's the rub. They are not an accurate barometer. Quite the contrary. They are dramatically misleading. Not just incomplete or inaccurate in some methodological or technical sense, but fundamentally wrong in that they create a deeply distorted picture of American values and American family life.

Let's return to the notion of core beliefs. Do most Americans naturally link declining child well-being to declining economic conditions? They do not. Do most Americans believe that real progress for children depends primarily on the creation and expansion of government programs to help children? They do not. Do most Americans view children's programs as an important electoral issue? They do not.

In fact, Americans are much more likely to link declining child well-being, not the state of the economy, but to the state of the culture. Similarly, Americans are much more likely to believe that real progress for children depends less on political change than it does on cultural change -- less on changes in government programs or government officials than it does on changes in values, especially the behavior and attitudes of parents.[1]

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[1] There is much evidence to support this conclusion. Consider, for example, the findings of two other recent public opinion surveys: the 1991 "American Family Values Study" conducted by Mellman & Lazarus, Inc. for the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, and the recent "Speaking of Kids" survey conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the National Commission on Children. In the Mass Mutual study, the two most frequently cited measures to strengthen families were "spending more time together as a family" (53 percent) and "parents teaching family values to their children" (53 percent). Ninety-two percent say that "mothers need to spend more time with their children" while 94 percent agree that "fathers need to spend more time with their children." Governmental and economic priorities -- such as "improving the financial situation of families," providing more day care services, and "having businesses permit more home-based work" -- all ranked far behind these cultural priorities. The National Commission on Children survey shows that more than half of Americans believe that children are worse off today with respect to their moral and religious training, the supervision and discipline they receive from their parents, and the time they have with their parents. The survey identifies parental time as the most important resource in fostering child well-being and two-parent families as best able to provide the necessary time, attention, and economic security for children.

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If you ask Americans whether it is getting harder to be a child today, most will answer "Yes." And, as we have seen, if you ask Americans to rank a list of economic problems in order of importance, they will do so. But if you simply ask them, "Why do you think it is getting harder to be child today?", here are the kinds of answers we have heard:

"It's not safe anymore to let children go outside and play."

"Parents need to spend more time with their children."

"Television is a bad influence."

"There is too much premarital sex and too many babies being born to unmarried girls and boys."

"The high divorce rate is bad for children."

"Drugs can ruin a child's life."

"Children today are not being taught the difference between right and wrong."

These types of answers -- so common, so obvious, so familiar to anyone who is not tone-deaf to American culture -- are conspicuously absent, however, from the opinion surveys that I have cited and that you are considering today. They are absent, not because Americans have ceased to hold these views, but rather because these polls do not permit the expression or measurement of such views. They are absent, in short, because these polls prescribe a relationship between child well-being and government programs, while rigorously excluding any consideration of the relationship between child well-being and cultural values.

But to ignore the role of cultural values is to ignore what most Americans believe to be the main issue, the heart of the entire matter. When the subject is child well-being, the language of choice for most Americans is the language of culture -- the language of right and wrong, of parental responsibility, and of the difficulty of being a good parent today in a culture that has grown unfriendly to children and families. If you exclude these concerns, all that is left is the language of these polls -- the official language of insider politics and legislative analysis. What you have excluded, in short, is the everyday language of the kitchen table and the real-life concerns of American families.

What should we make of this fact?

It is a common (though largely unexamined) belief that political change occurs quickly while cultural change occurs slowly -- that political change can be achieved through leadership and conscious human agency, while cultural change is more mysterious and impersonal, coming about through the complex workings of deep social processes.

Consequently, we see a tendency among elites, especially in Washington, to view programmatic politics as the way that committed people bring about social change. Accordingly, we frequently appeal to the nation to express its moral commitment by expanding public services for children. Less frequently do we appeal to individuals to express moral commitment through private behavior. Thus, to propose five new government programs for children is to be serious about helping children. To propose five new ideas for changing behavior in a way that privileges children is to be accused of proposing a rationale for inaction.

I would like to suggest that exactly the opposite is true. Cultural change can occur quickly. Witness the cultural revolution of the 1960s -- probably the most consequential set of social changes in this generation. Cultural change, moreover, is not mysterious or impersonal. It is deeply influenced by human agency, including political leadership. Consider the role of the Kennedy presidency in contributing to the cultural ethos of the 1960s, or the Reagan presidency in contributing to the cultural ethos of the 1980s.

Finally, at least in the area of child well-being, cultural change is simply the heart of the matter. It is where the rubber hits the road; where real social change either happens or does not happen. The American people are skeptical of purely programmatic remedies to children's problems not because they fear social change, but because they demand it; not because government programs cost too much, but because they cost and do too little; not because they go too far, but because they frequently do not go very far at all.

Thus, instead of seeking to educate the public, maybe we ought to take seriously the priorities of the kitchen table. Let me list just five: parental time with children, divorce, unwed parenthood, the role of fathers, and safe places for children to play. Each of these issues is of great concern to Americans, and each is essentially a cultural issue. In each area, strong political leadership could foster important social changes. In short, perhaps we can truly improve child well-being in our nation by listening to the cultural conversation at the kitchen table, rather than dismissing it as irrelevant to the serious business of Washington politics. Thank you very much.

-end-

Note: This testimony was prepared by David Blankenhorn, the president of the Institute for American Values, and Dr. Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, a research associate at the Institute. For more information, contact the Institute for American Values at 1841 Broadway, Suite 211, New York City 10023. Telephone (212) 246-3942. FAX (212) 541-6665.

Two Philosophies of Child Well-Being

Witness Table:	**Kitchen Table:**
Problem: *Economy*	Problem: *Culture*
Strategy: *Better Government Programs*	Strategy: *Better Parents, Values*
Conclusion: *Kids as Politics*	Conclusion: *Family as Social Institution*

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you very much.

Mr. Rector, we welcome you, and we've put your statement in the record. The floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT RECTOR, POLICY ANALYST FOR FAMILY AND WELFARE ISSUES, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. RECTOR. Thank you for having me.

We are here today to talk about the state of American families. I have a couple of charts there that show the growth of the financial well being of families over the last 40 years. The fact of the matter is today that families with children are the lowest income group in the United States today. Their per capita, post-tax income is lower than for any other demographic group. It's lower than that of elderly households, single households, or couples without children.

The reason for this is fairly clear to see. If we look at the one chart right here, it shows that in 1950 the average family average two-parent family in the United States paid 2 percent of its income to the Federal Government in taxation. It paid no income tax, and it paid 2 percent of its income in social security tax.

Today, that same family pays 24 percent of its income to the Federal Government in taxes. If you throw in state and local taxes, you're talking about a tax rate that's over 35 percent and approaching 40 percent.

I would note that we've heard some remarks in recent months about how badly the family did under Ronald Reagan and how Reagan's treatment of the middle class in taxation was very bad. This chart and the data does not indicate that. What it shows is that the 1980s were the first decade in which the tax rate on families did not go up. The problem with Reagan's policies is not that he increased taxes on middle class families, but that he failed to pull them down, and in particular, that he ratified the social security tax increases which were passed under Jimmy Carter, and he accelerated them in the 1983 social security deal.

Now, what is the practical consequence of that chart? What that means is that for the average family of four, that change in the tax rate from 2 percent to 24 percent, cost the average family $8,200 per year in lost income.

By contrast, the cost of a home purchased last year, a new home purchased last year, including mortgage and interest payments, come to the, on average, $7,900 per year. So, the increases in federal taxes on families over the last 40 years, actually take more revenue out of the average family than is equal to the entire cost of the family home mortgage. That is how badly the Federal Government is hurting the family in terms of the family finances.

Families find themselves working harder, spending more and more hours in the labor force, just to barely get ahead. Nearly all of the income of the average working mother in a two-parent family, goes, in fact, not to raise the family standard of living, but merely to pay for this gargantuan tax increase on families over the last 40 years.

As a result of the pressure that we are putting on families, forcing them to work more and more hours and allowing them to

retain less and less of the income that they earn, parents now spend more time in the labor force and 40 percent less time with their children than they did just 25 years ago. And every poll that I have ever seen shows that a majority of parents and a majority of families state that they would prefer to work, to have at least one spouse spend more time with their children, if they could economically afford to do so. And the reason that they cannot economically afford to do so is, I think, transparently clear in these charts.

Now, this is one problem, and one clear problem facing the average middle class family—is that it is overtaxed—but there is a second problem that is deeper and going to be somewhat harder to solve, and that is the decline in the rate of wage growth for the average earner.

In the 1950s and the 1960s, the real income of the average husband, adjusted for inflation, doubled between 1950 and 1970. Between 1970 and the present time, the real post-inflation income of the average husband, pre-tax, went up about 10 to 20 percent. There's been a dramatic decline in the rate of wage increases for these families, and that has meant that almost all of the income increase that you see there in the second chart from 1970 on, is caused not by a rise in real wages, but by placing the second spouse into the labor force. It's due to the fact that families have more people working longer hours all the time.

So, what we need to do is not only to directly reduce the rate of taxes on families with children, but also to cut the rate of taxation on investment and savings in the United States which is dramatically higher than the other nations that we are competing with. We cannot, in this country, compete with an effective post-inflation capital gains tax rate of 80 percent, against countries all across the globe that have no tax whatsoever on capital gains and investment inflation.

If we can increase the rate of investment and savings in the United States, we will have a growth in productivity which we would hope our goal should be to try to restore that real wage growth that you see on that chart there in the '50s and '60s, which largely reflects the growth of earnings of a single earner.

I have a chart in my testimony that shows the growth of single earnings, and you can see that it doubles between 1950 and 1970 just on the earnings of one husband alone.

We have developed a proposal that combines these two ideas. Our proposal would provide a $1,000 non-refundable tax credit for school age children, to all taxpaying families, and it would provide a $1,500 tax credit for each preschool child in the family. It would also lower taxes on investment and savings. It would allow for what we call "tax fairness" for investment, allow for the proper depreciation, allowing for inflation for business in order to restore productivity growth in our economy.

Now, the pertinent question, I think, and the number one question is how to pay for this. The worst way to pay for middle class tax relief would be to raise taxes on other parts of the economy, to raise taxes on savings and investment and on wealthy people who create jobs. When you raise taxes on so-called "wealthy" people, they may pay somewhat more in taxes, but the poor end up with pink slips.

What we need to do in order to provide middle-class tax relief is not rob from Peter to pay Paul, but to control the growth of waste in the Federal Government. By capping the growth of non-defense spending, which is now growing in record terms. In the last four years, in inflation-adjusted dollars, non-defense spending excluding the S&L bailout and excluding interest, increased in inflation-adjusted terms by 23 percent. By contrast, in the 12 preceding years between 1976 and 1989, the entire increase in that entire period was only 21 percent. So, we've grown more in four years than we did in the preceding 12 years all combined.

What we need to do is, in the future, cap the growth of non-defense spending at 5 percent per annum, and return this waste dividend to the American taxpayer, and particularly to families with children. You can cap the growth of non-defense spending at 5 percent per annum without touching Social Security, Medicare, or welfare—in fact, without actually touching any program that any normal citizen outside of the beltway has ever even heard of. That is the way to provide for significant tax relief for American families with children.

Another element that we need to look at is welfare reform that encourages the growth of two-parent families and discourages the formation of single-parent families. Some of the proposals that we have heard about today such as that of the Rockefeller Commission, because it increases disproportionately monetary rewards to single-parent families in comparison to working two-parent families, would in fact increase the number of single-families in the United States. It is anti-family and, in fact, the major problem with the Rockefeller Commission was that its rhetoric did not match its policies at all, and I know for a fact that most of the conservative members of that commission did not, in principle, agree with many of the recommendations that the Senator suggested they did agree with.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. They voted for it, didn't they?

Mr. RECTOR. What?

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. They voted, though.

Mr. RECTOR. They voted reluctantly for an entire package, and I know for a fact that they did not, for example, agree with the structure, and some of the comments in the report itself show that they did not agree with, for example, providing the child allowance without modification of other welfare programs, and they certainly did not agree with the guaranteed child support which was changed from being a universal program into being an experimental program and is, in my mind, one of the worst ideas in welfare I've ever heard. It is, in fact, a guaranteed minimum income for illegitimate children and is exactly what we don't need.

In conclusion, I would say that families need three things quite clearly. Families need tax relief, but families also need wage and productivity growth in the economy that will allow their real

standard of living to increase, without an increase in the number of hours worked; and, thirdly, we need welfare reform that will encourage the formation of two-parent families. Children need two parents, and for too long we have been going in the opposite direction, subsidizing single-parenthood, and children are suffering because of it. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Robert Rector follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT RECTOR, POLICY ANALYST FOR FAMILY AND WELFARE ISSUES, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION, WASHINGTON, DC

INTRODUCTION

Lawmakers in Washington suddenly have awakened to something well understood by Americans who struggle every month to stretch their paycheck to meet family needs: the American family is overtaxed. To cut this tax burden, both parties have submitted legislation in Congress. On the Republican side, bills cutting family taxes have been introduced in the House by Representatives Frank Wolf of Virginia (H.R. 1277) and Vin Weber of Minnesota (H.R. 3744), and by Senators Dan Coats of Indiana and Bob Kasten of Indiana (S. 710). On the Democrat side, bills have been introduced by Senators Albert Gore of Tennessee (S. 995), Lloyd Bentsen of Texas (S. 1921), and Bill Bradley of New Jersey (S. 1846), and in the House by Representative Tom Downey of New York (H.R. 2242).

These measures represent a welcome, if belated, recognition that action is needed to reverse a tax trend that is wounding American families. During the past four decades, the average American family has seen a steadily larger slice of its income devoured by taxes, making it harder for many families to support their children.

When state and local taxes are included, government now takes over one-third of the income of a two-parent family. Measured by average after-tax per capita income, families with children are now the lowest income household group in America; their average after-tax income is below that of elderly households, single persons, and couples without children. During the past four decades the federal income tax burden on a family of four has increased by over 300 percent. Single Americans and married couples with no children have escaped the bulk of this tax increase. This to a great extent is because the federal tax code has become increasingly biased against families with children. The main reason for this is the steady decline in the value of the personal exemption applying to children, which is the tax allowance for the cost of raising children.

But mushrooming taxation is only part of the difficult financial problem facing the average American family. The other half is the slowdown in the growth of real wages and salaries for parents. After 1970, wages and salaries, adjusted for inflation, have grown much less rapidly than in the 1950s and 1960s.[1] For the first twenty-five years after World War II, the

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[1] All income figures in this paper are adjusted for inflation using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index, model CPI-U-X1. This deflator more accurately depicts changes in consumer prices in the 1970s and early 1980s, and is preferred for historical comparisons. If the alternative CPI-U were used, the data would show the same rates of income growth as those presented in this chapter for the 1950s, 1960s, and 1980s, but slightly lower income growth in the 1970s. All figures in the text depicting taxes as a percentage of income and income lost to increased taxes are unaffected by the inflation measure chosen. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, Money Income of Households, Families, and Persons in the United States: 1990, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No.174 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office,

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average family could expect a continuing improvement in income, based on the steady real growth of one parent's salary. But since about 1970, many families have been forced to place both parents in the work force in order to achieve even modest growth in real family income, both before and after taxes. Even the Reagan tax cuts during the 1980s, though they did help, were not sufficient to offset the economic policy mistakes of the 1970s. Caught between this slowdown in wage growth and the explosive growth of taxation, parents must work more and more for even a modest boost in family income.

A third major problem facing families and children is the decline of marriage. In 1965 when the War on Poverty began, roughly one out of four black children were born out of wedlock. Today, the rate is 65 percent, and if current trends continue the rate will rise to 75 percent by the year 2000. A large part of this increase in single parenthood has been caused by the expanding welfare state which has transformed low income fathers from being necessary breadwinners to being financial liabilities for their families. The current welfare system must be transformed from a system which actively penalizes marriage into a new system which promotes the formation of self-sufficient, two-parent families.

PRO-FAMILY POLICIES

A sound policy to help American families should be based on four principles.

Principle #1: Provide immediate tax cuts for overtaxed families with children.

Principle #2: Provide immediate reduction of taxes on savings and investment to stimulate productivity growth in the economy and thereby raise the real wages and salaries of American parents as well as other workers.

Principle #3: Provide the above tax relief without increasing the deficit above projected levels by capping the growth of non-defense spending at five percent per annum, matching each dollar of family tax relief with one dollar in reduced domestic spending.

Principle #4: Overhaul the welfare system to promote responsible behavior, marriage and self-sufficiency instead of dependency and single parenthood.

HOW WASHINGTON HAS HIKED TAXES ON CHILDREN

Federal taxation of families with children has increased dramatically over the past four decades. In 1948, a family of four with the median family income level paid two percent of its

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1991), pp.8-9 for a discussion of the CPI-U-X1 and CPI-U.

income to the federal government in taxes.[2] In 1989 the equivalent family paid nearly 24 percent of its income to the federal government.[3] When state and local taxes are included, the tax burden exceeds one-third of family income.[4]

As Table 1 shows, the rise in federal income taxes over nearly 40 years on families with children has been much faster than for other groups of Americans. From 1954 to 1989, the average federal income tax rates for single persons and married couples with no children did not increase.[5] But for a married couple with two children the average income tax rate more than doubled. And for a family with four children the average income tax rate rose from zero in 1954 to 2.6 percent in 1960 and to 6.3 percent in 1989.

The root cause of this growing anti-family bias in the federal income tax code has been the eroding of the value of the personal exemption. The personal exemption for children was intended to offset part of the annual costs of raising a child by deducting an amount of money from taxable income. In 1948, the personal exemption was $600, equal to roughly 20 percent of the median income of two-parent families, which was then $3,272.[6] For a family of four, the $600 personal exemption shielded nearly 80 percent of family income from federal income tax. Families could reduce their tax bill further by itemizing deductions or taking the standard deduction, and this protected most of the remaining 20 percent of income from income tax. The result: in the late 1940s and early 1950s the average family with children paid little or no income tax.

In the past four decades, however, the value of the personal exemption has lagged far behind the rise in incomes and inflation. Thus although the 1986 tax reform raised the value of the personal exemption to $2,000, this only partially offset the erosion in the value of the

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[2]The value of the personal exemption also eroded between the imposition of the federal income tax in 1913 and Word War II. But 1948 is chosen as a benchmark because it is neither a depression year nor a war year, and because it marks the beginning of a long period of high inflation and rising taxes.

[3]These figures represent the tax rates for a family of four at the median family income level for two-parent families.

[4]Estimate based on data supplied by U.S. Bureau of the Census.

[5]The average or effective income tax rate is a measure of total taxes compared with income. By contrast, the marginal tax rate, or "tax bracket," is a measure only of the tax paid on the last dollar earned. Thus many families have experienced a cut in their marginal tax rates, yet their average tax rates have climbed.

[6]Mary F. Henson, Trends in Income, by Selected Characteristics: 1947 to 1988, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No.167 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), p.19.

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exemption since the 1940s. Chart 1 shows the declining value of personal exemptions relative to the median income of two-parent families. As the value of the personal exemption has declined, the income tax paid by families with children has increased dramatically.

Indeed, for the personal exemption today to have the same value relative to family income that it did in 1948, it would have to be around $8,000 in 1992 and around $9,000 in 1996. At least a partial restoration of the value of the personal exemption is a necessary step in improving the financial well-being of American families.

The second major blow to family finance has come from the increase in Security Social taxes, technically known as "payroll taxes." In 1948, workers paid a two percent Social Security tax on annual wages of up to $3,000: one percent was paid directly by the employee and one percent paid indirectly by the employer through the so-called employer share.[7]

By 1989, combined Social Security taxes had risen to 15 percent of wages on incomes up to $48,000. While all workers have suffered from skyrocketing Social Security taxes, the bite has been most severe on working families with children. Since Social Security taxes, unlike regular income taxes, are not adjusted for the number of dependents in a family, a working parent trying to support a family of four feels the sting of this tax far more sharply than a single person at the same wage level. The effect of Social Security taxation is particularly severe on lower income parents; a family with an income of $25,000 per year pays $3,750 in Social Security taxes. Social Security taxes for young parents today greatly exceed the real value of any retirement benefits they will receive from the system.[8]

UNDERMINING FAMILY INCOME

Chart 2 shows the growth in federal taxes as a share of median family income.[9] Starting in 1948 at two percent of income, effective tax rates rose each decade. By 1979, the median family of four paid 24 percent of its income to the federal government. Because of Ronald Reagan's policies, the rise in federal tax rates on the average family were halted. If he had persevered in his original tax reduction plans, taxes as a share of average family income actually would have declined. Yet, the initial Reagan income tax cuts were partly offset by tax increases

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[7] Liberal and conservative economists agree that both shares of the Social Security tax are in fact direct taxes on workers' wages. See Joseph A. Pechman and Benjamin A. Okner, Who Bears the Tax Burden? (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1974), pp.25-43.

[8] Peter J. Ferrara, Social Security: the Inherent Contradiction (Washington, D.C.: The Cato Institute, 1980).

[9] Social Security and income taxes as a share of the median income for a family of four in each year. Henson, op. cit., p. 21 and other data provided by the Bureau of the Census. Tax calculations from Heritage model, assuming that families claim itemized deductions equal to 23 percent of gross income through 1986 and 18 percent thereafter.

in 1982. And Reagan unwisely agreed to the hikes in Social Security taxes proposed by the 1982 National Commission on Social Security Reform.

But despite the rollback of Reagan's early promise to cut taxes on middle class families, Reagan did stem what had been the relentless growth in taxes as a share of family income. During the 1980s, for the first time since World War II, effective tax rates on the average family with children did not rise. Average taxes in 1989 were 24 percent of family income, roughly what they were in 1979. President Reagan halted the growth of taxes -- now it is time to begin reducing the enormous family tax burden.

The effect of federal taxes on family income is shown in Chart 3. Two facts stand out. One is that in each decade up to 1980 the rate of increase in pre-tax family income has declined. The other is that the "tax bite" or share of family income collected by the IRS has increased. Thus taxes rose as income growth slowed. This trend peaked during the 1970s. In that decade median pre-tax family income, adjusted for inflation, increased by about $6,000. But of that $6,000, exploding federal taxes swallowed up $4,000. Thus of every $1.00 in income gained by the average family in the 1970s the federal government took 66 cents.

Reagan was unable to roll back the punitive tax increases of the 1970s. The basic reality remains unchanged for American families: for the past two decades, out of every $1.00 in real increased income earned by the average family the federal government has taken 50 cents.

TAXING FAMILIES OUT OF HOUSE AND HOME

The income loss due to increased taxation seriously strains American family finances and profoundly affects American family life. Chart 4 shows the effects of the increases in federal income and Social Security taxes since World War II on the finances of the average family. Total pre-tax income for the median two-parent family in 1989 was $41,442.[10] After taxes this family's income falls to $32,408. If federal taxes as a percentage of family income were restored to 1948 levels, the family's post-tax income would be $40,618. For the median income American family, the loss of income in 1989 because of the increase in federal taxes on families, due to the falling value of the personal exemption and the rise in Social Security taxes since the early post-World War II period, was $8,210.

This income loss severely affects the ability of families to support themselves. The median price of a single family home purchased in 1989, for instance, was $93,100. The average annual mortgage payment on such a home (including principal and interest) was $7,920.[11] Thus, the annual family income loss due to increased federal tax rates for the average family

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[10]Data provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Total pre-tax family income includes the employer share of Social Security tax deducted from the parents' wages.

[11]National Association of Realtors, Home Sales, January 1991, p.12.

actually exceeds the annual cost of an average family home mortgage.

The loss of income due to rising taxes also helps explain why so many mothers have felt forced to join the work force to make ends meet. For the average family in which both the husband and wife are employed, the wife's earnings equal about 32 percent of total family income.[12] The average employed mother, juggling her job and family demands, knows only too well that despite her efforts, her earnings do not seem to be raising her family's living standard very much. The reason: only about one-third of her earnings are actually taken home for the family's budget. The remaining two-thirds of today's mother's earnings pay the higher federal taxes on family income levied since World War II. In fact, if federal tax rates as a percentage of family income were restored to 1948 levels, and if the average employed mother in a two-parent family were to leave the labor force entirely, the family would see only a moderate dip in post-tax income.

Charts 5 and 6 show why this is so. Average total pre-tax income in 1989 in families where both spouses were employed was $50,267. Of this, the husband's average earnings were $33,948 and the wife's average earnings were $16,319.[13] After federal taxes, post-tax income for this family fell to $39,046. If federal tax rates as a percentage of family income were restored to 1948 levels, the family's post-tax income would be $32,591, if only the husband worked, or just $6,455 less than the family's current post-tax income today with both spouses working. Thus nearly two-thirds of the employed wife's average earnings go to pay for increased taxation; only one-third to support the family.

FAMILY TIME FAMINE

This does not mean that all employed mothers would want to or should leave the labor force if taxes were lowered to earlier levels. But it does show strongly that mushrooming federal taxation is a key factor in the financial and personal strains that force many mothers reluctantly into the work force.

It also helps to explain why parents today typically spend 40 percent less time with their children than did parents in earlier generations. While parents in 1965 spent 30 hours per week in direct contact with their children, by 1985 such time spent with children had dropped to 17 hours.[14]

Surveys indicate that the pressure on parents to work harder and longer to keep the family financially afloat is eroding the quality of family life. A 1988 USA Today survey found that 73

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[12]U.S. Bureau of the Census, Earnings of Married-Couple Families, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No.165 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), pp. 8, 9.

[13]Pre-tax income figures include the employers' share of Social Security tax. Data provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

[14]William R. Mattox Jr., "The Parent Trap," Policy Review, Winter 1991, p.6.

percent of two-parent families would choose to have one parent remain at home full time to care for their children if "money were not an issue."[15] A 1989 survey by the New York Times found that 72 percent of employed fathers and 83 percent of employed mothers feel torn between the demands of their jobs and their desire as parents to spend more time with their families. A 1989 Cornell University study discovered that two-thirds of mothers employed full time would prefer to work fewer hours in order to devote more time to family life. And over half of the fathers and mothers surveyed in a similar Los Angeles Times poll conducted in 1990 stated that they feel guilty about spending too little time with their children.[16]

The conclusion from these data is clear: the best way for the federal government to strengthen families and assist parents in their vital role of raising the next generation of Americans is to reduce their tax burden.[17]

HOW TO PROVIDE FAMILY TAX RELIEF

The simplest way to reduce the tax pinch on middle class families with children would be to restore the income tax personal exemption for children, generally known as the "dependent exemption," to its 1948 level. In 1948 the dependent exemption was equal to roughly 20 percent of the median income for two-parent families. For the exemption to have the same value in terms of family income, it should be set at approximately $8,000 in 1992 and raised to $9,000 in the mid-1990s. Doing this would put roughly $1,000 in the pocket of the average family in new tax relief for each child.

Raising the exemption, however, would not be the best way to provide relief. Most families with incomes below $27,000 per year do not pay enough income tax to get the full value of raising the personal exemption for dependent children to $9,000. Yet they are still heavily taxed. This is because income liable to Social Security taxes is not reduced by exemptions and other deductions. Those families on modest incomes thus need relief from Social Security taxes as well as from income taxes. A practical way to provide reasonable tax relief to these families would be to enact a non-refundable "child credit." Parents could use such a credit to reduce both their income tax and the employer and employee Social Security tax liability.

The following example illustrates the difference between an income tax exemption and a tax credit. With an income tax exemption, income equal to the amount of the exemption is exempted from income tax. Thus for a family in the 15 percent income tax bracket, a $1,000 exemption decreases taxes owed by $150. By contrast, under a tax credit the amount of the credit is deducted from the taxes paid. It directly reduces tax liability. Thus for the same family in the 15 percent income tax bracket, a $1,000 tax credit decreases net taxes $1,000. And

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[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.

because a tax credit can be applied to both income and Social Security taxes it is a more effective way of reducing the tax burden on modest income families.

The Family Tax Freedom Plan As Chart 4 above showed, increases in federal tax rates as a percentage of family income since the early 1950s have raised the tax burden on the average family by over $8,000 per annum. While it would be impossible to eliminate this excessive taxation in one step, it is possible to begin to roll back the family's tax burden. The most effective way to begin to roll back the tax burden would be to provide a $1,000 tax credit for each child under age 18 in working families. The tax credit could be used to reduce a family's income tax liability, employee Social Security tax liability, and employer Social Security tax liability.[18] The credit would be available to working and taxpaying families only. And the credit would not be refundable, meaning the value of the credit could not exceed a family's tax liability under the three taxes cited above.

For the average family in the 15 percent federal income tax bracket, a $1,000 per child credit would give roughly the same level of tax relief as raising the dependent exemption in the income tax code back to 1950 levels.

The credit would substantially reduce the tax burden of lower income working families. Federal taxes would be eliminated on working families with incomes below roughly 120 percent of the federal poverty threshold. Example: under the proposal, a family of four earning around $16,000 in 1992 would pay no federal taxes.[19] Families with earned incomes above $16,000 generally would have their taxes cut by the full $1000 per child but would continue to pay some reduced federal taxes.

Larger Credit for Pre-School Children The families facing the most severe financial pressures are those with young children. Families with one or more pre-school children must either bear the cost of day care for their children or must forgo the salary of one parent while she or he remains at home to care for the children.

An appropriate family tax policy would give greater tax relief to families facing the higher

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[18] The maximum value of the proposed credits thus would not exceed a family's total tax liability, represented by federal income tax and social security taxes paid by the employee and employer. For families receiving the earned income tax credit (EITC), the value of the new credits proposed in this chapter would not exceed the family's net tax liability after receipt of the earned income tax credit. Thus if the current EITC already reduced a family's tax liability to zero, that family would not be eligible to receive the proposed new credits because it has no tax liability.

[19] As with the current earned income tax credit low income families would continue to earn credit toward future Social Security retirement benefits based on the amount of labor performed even if no actual Social Security taxes were paid.

costs of raising young children. Such a family policy, moreover, should not discriminate against families making the economic sacrifice of keeping one parent at home to care for young children. Such a policy thus should give an extra $500 credit for each child under age six in the family. This credit would be available to all taxpaying families with young children and would replace the current dependent care tax credit, which is available only to parents using paid non-parental day care.[20]

The family tax freedom plan thus would provide two levels of tax credit:

Level I: a $1,000 tax credit for each child aged 6 to 18.

Level II: a $1,500 tax credit for each child under age 6.

Both credits could be used to reduce income tax liability and Social Security taxes owed through the employee and employer share. The credits would not be refundable -- meaning that the credits received could not exceed the value of a family's combined tax liability.

The tax credits outlined above are but a modest attempt to alleviate some of the crushing tax burden that has been imposed on families with children since 1948. With the proposed new credits, a two parent family at median family income with one pre-school and one school age child would pay $2,500 less in taxes. Total Federal taxes on this family would fall to around 19 percent of income, roughly the same level as existed in 1973. Thus while the credits would not go very far toward eliminating the excessive taxation which has arisen in the post war period, they would be a small first step in the right direction.

HOW TO PAY FOR FAMILY TAX RELIEF: RETURNING THE "PEACE DIVIDEND" AND THE "WASTE DIVIDEND" TO THE TAXPAYERS

Proposals such as those from Senator Gore and Representative Downey would cut taxes modestly for middle class families, but would couple these tax cuts with increases on higher-income families. The trouble is that these tax increases would slow investment which in turn would slow the growth of economic productivity and hence slow real wage growth for the average American. The result: what families would win with tax relief they would lose in slower growth of real wages. Thus tax proposals like the Gore/Downey plan actually would hurt all American families.

The way to provide for family tax reduction is not to increase taxes on other Americans. Raising taxes on one group to cut the tax burden on another would do nothing to improve productivity in the economy. The way to cut taxes on families is to restrain the growth of federal non-defense spending, which has grown faster than the rest of the economy for the last three

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[20]The proposed credits also would replace the current tax exclusion for employer provided dependent care for children.

decades.

The best way to provide funding for family tax relief is to cap the growth of total federal domestic spending at five percent per annum and to return the savings from this "waste dividend" back to overtaxed families. Under such a plan the family tax credits outlined above could be phased in over a four year period; in each year during the phase-in the tax revenue loss from the proposed credits would be matched, dollar for dollar, by spending reductions under the five percent spending growth cap. The value of the family tax credits would be increased each year and would reach their full value of $1,000 for a school age child and $1,500 for a pre-school child in 1996. In that year the revenue loss from the proposed new tax credits for children would be between around $55 billion per annum. However, by 1996 the five percent spending cap would have resulted in a corresponding domestic spending reduction of some $42 billion per year. Up to an additional $15 billion per annum could be obtained through extra cuts in the defense budget, which under the existing budget agreement is already scheduled to be cut some 20 percent in real terms over the next five years. Thus under this plan, each dollar of family tax relief would be matched by one dollar of reduced non-defense and defense spending. Thus the proposed family tax credits would not cause any increase in the federal deficit; the deficit would continue to shrink, and at current projected rates would be cut in half by 1996.

GRAPPLING WITH WAGE STAGNATION

The most pressing financial problem facing families with children today is over-taxation. The government can readily address this problem through tax cutting strategies such as those outlined above. But the American family faces another financial problem which requires a more indirect and long-term solution. That problem is the slowdown in wage and salary growth due to an economy experiencing low productivity improvements. The heavy tax burden on savings and investment is the principal cause of this slow growth.

As Chart 3 showed, median family income in constant dollars grew less rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s than in prior decades. Most of the increase in family income in the 1970s and 1980s was due to wives entering the labor force. While in earlier periods a husband's salary alone normally could provide a steady increase in real family income, after 1970 it became necessary in many families for both spouses to enter the labor force just to achieve a modest increase in the family's standard of living.

Chart 7 shows the constant-dollar growth of income in married couple families in which only the husband is employed. (These data provide a reasonable proxy for the salary growth of husbands in general since World War II.) Between 1950 and 1970, the real income of husbands nearly doubled. Between 1970 and 1990, however, real pre-tax incomes grew by only 8 percent.[21] What is worse, growing federal taxation swallowed up what little income gain there

[21]These data slightly underestimate the growth in real incomes since 1970 because they do not include increases in non-wage benefits such as medical coverage. Nevertheless even if

was; post-tax income for these single earner families has not increased at all over the past twenty years.

The stagnation in post-tax income of working husbands played a large role in inducing large numbers of wives to enter the labor force in the 1970s and 1980s. While this extra labor did raise family incomes somewhat, at least half of the family income added in this manner was swallowed by rapidly escalating federal taxes. Today's families thus are being crushed by the dual problem of high taxation and slow wage growth.

Lawmakers interested in relieving the financial pressures on the modern family not only must reduce taxes on families but they must also find policies that will restore the wage growth which was characteristic of the 1950s and 1960s. These policies include:

1) cutting the capital gains tax rate to 15% and indexing this tax rate to the rate of inflation;

2) extending and expanding IRA's (the so-called IRA-plus program);

3) creating tax fairness for investment -- reducing taxes on business investment by indexing depreciation schedules for inflation.

Such pro-productivity tax polices are profoundly pro-family. If we can restore productivity and wage growth to what it was in the 1950s and 1960s, the average parent could expect real hourly wages to grow by nearly 50 percent in the next decade. This is crucial to relieving the financial pressures on today's beleaguered families.

PRO-FAMILY WELFARE REFORM

The current welfare system is anti-family. In fact, the system has made marriage economically irrational for most low-income parents. Welfare has transformed marriage from a legal institution designed to protect and nurture children into an institution which financially penalizes nearly all low-income parents who practice it. The current welfare system has all but destroyed family structure in the inner-city. Welfare establishes strong financial disincentives, effectively blocking the formation of intact, two-parent families. Example: Suppose a young man in the inner-city has fathered a child out of wedlock with his girlfriend. If this young father

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increase in benefits are taken into account the fact remains that there was a significant slowdown in the increase of husbands' total income (including salaries and benefits) after 1970. Data from Henson, op. cit. See also U.S. Bureau of the Census, Money Income of Households, Families, and Persons in the United States: 1987, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No.162 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), p.107. This gives historical data on the incomes of males employed full time year round. More recent data are available in later issues. All data series show nearly identical trends in male earnings over time.

abandons his responsibilities to the mother and child, government will step in and support the mother and child with welfare. If the mother has a second child out of wedlock, as is common, average combined benefits will reach around $13,000 per year.

If, on the other hand, the young man does what society believes is morally correct (i.e., marries the mother and takes a job to support the family), government policy takes the opposite course. Welfare benefits would be almost completely eliminated. If the young father makes more than $4.50 per hour, the federal government actually begins taking away his income through taxes. The federal welfare reform act of 1988 will permit the young father to marry the mother and join the family to receive welfare, but only as long as he does not work. Once he takes a full-time job to support his family, the welfare benefits are quickly eliminated and the father's earnings are subject to taxation.

Current welfare may best be conceptualized as a system which offers each single mother a "paycheck" worth an average of between $8,500 and $15,000 depending on the state.[22] The mother has a contract with the government; she will continue to receive her "paycheck" as long as she fulfills two conditions:

1) she must not work; and
2) she must not marry an employed male.[23]

Low-income parents have responded to the destructive financial incentives of the welfare system. Single mothers on welfare in the inner city drift through a series of "sequential common law marriages" with different males. Lacking the social, legal, and financial incentives which help to cement middle-class families, these sequential relationships do not flourish. Strong, permanent two-parent family units seldom emerge.

Current government policies affecting low-income families must be reversed. Incentives from existing programs which promote single parenthood and prolonged dependency must be reduced. Conversely, new policies must be devised which will promote self-sufficiency and encourage the formation of two-parent families. Pro-marriage welfare reform should have the following components:

1) Provide vouchers for the purchase of medical insurance for all low-income families not on welfare, along the lines proposed by President Bush and the Heritage Foundation.

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[22] This sum equals the value of welfare benefits from different programs for the average mother on AFDC.

[23] Technically the mother may be married to a husband who works part-time at very low wages and still be eligible for some aid under the AFDC-UP program. However, if the husband works a significant number of hours per month even at a low hourly rate, his earnings will be sufficient to eliminate the family's eligibility to AFDC-UP and most other welfare.

2) Provide tax relief to low-income working families as discussed above.

3) Do not increase the welfare benefits package provided to single mothers enrolled in AFDC.

4) Require mothers receiving AFDC who do not have pre-school children or who have been on AFDC for over seven years to provide full-time community service in exchange for the welfare benefits they receive.

5) Experiment with "wedfare" programs which provide bonus payments to single mothers who marry and leave the welfare system.

CONCLUSION

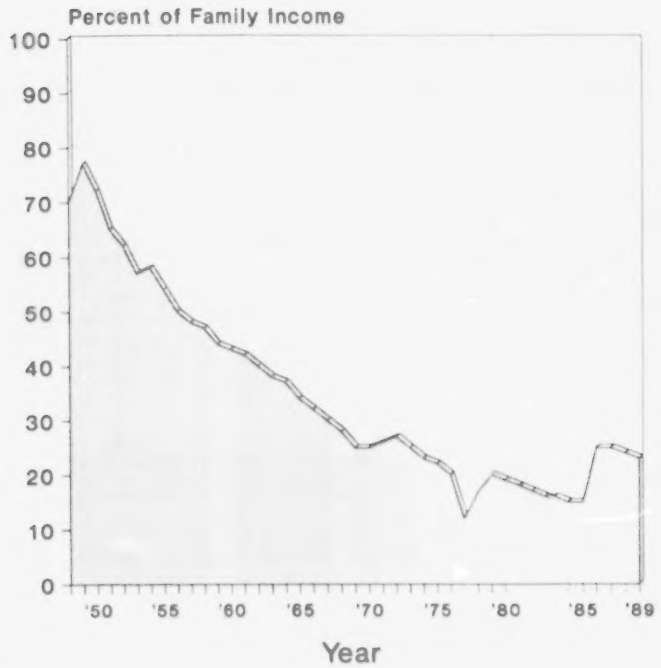
America's too often disparaged middle class family is the principal institution by which the work ethic, self discipline, intellectual motivation, and moral character are passed on to the next generation. What families need from government is not new spending and new social programs. Those have done little or nothing to help families, and paying for them has added to the tax burden on families. What families really need is threefold. First, for government to allow them to keep a greater share of their own hard-earned money. Second, for government to cut taxes on investment and savings in order to stimulate productivity growth and to raise real wages throughout the economy. Third, a reform of the welfare system to promote rather than penalize the formation of self-sufficient, two-parent families.

Table 1
Federal Income Tax for Median Income Family by Family Size and Type, 1948-1989

		Single		Joint					
				No Children		2 Children		4 Children	
Year	Median Family Income	Tax	% of Income	Tax	% of Income	Tax	% of Income	Tax	% of Income
1948	$3,187	$300	9.4%	$208	6.5%	$9	0.3%	$0	0.0%
1954	4,167	534	12.8	402	9.6	162	3.9	0	0.0
1960	5,620	780	13.9	625	11.1	385	6.9	145	2.6
1965	7,532	962	12.8	741	9.8	524	7.0	328	4.4
1972	11,116	1,544	13.9	1,201	10.8	916	8.2	631	5.7
1978	17,640	2,602	14.7	2,101	11.9	1,768	10.0	1,408	8.0
1980	21,023	3,348	15.9	2,643	12.6	2,176	10.4	1,756	8.4
1982	23,433	3,543	15.1	2,767	11.8	2,327	9.9	1,904	8.1
1984	26,433	3,641	13.8	2,844	10.8	2,421	9.2	2,061	7.8
1986	29,458	4,107	13.9	3,217	10.9	2,744	9.3	2,348	8.0
1987	30,853	3,869	12.5	2,876	9.3	2,306	7.5	1,736	5.6
1989	34,213	4,404	12.8	3,352	9.8	2,751	8.0	2,151	6.3

Note: Median income is the level at which half of all families have income below that level, and half above. Examples assume itemizable expenses equal to 23 percent of Adjusted Gross Income in all years. No deductions are made for two-income families.
Sources: Figures for 1948-1978 from Eugene Steurle, "The Tax Treatment of Families of Different Sizes," *Taxing the Family*, (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1983), p. 76. Figures for 1978-1989 from Thomas M. Humbert, "Ending the Tax Code's Anti-Family Bias by Increasing the Personal Exemption to $6,300," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 667, January 30, 1989. Income data based on *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the U.S.*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, various years.

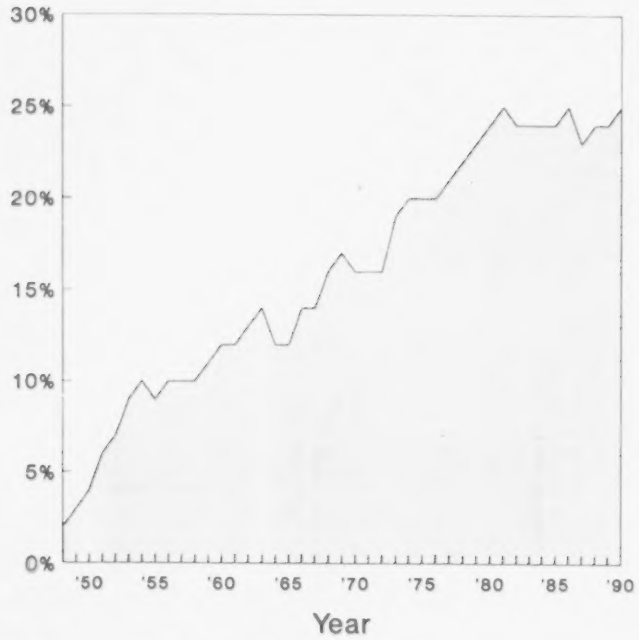
Chart 1
Share of Income Protected from Federal Income Tax by Personal Exemptions



Source: Heritage Tax Model, income data from U.S. Bureau of Census

Heritage DataChart

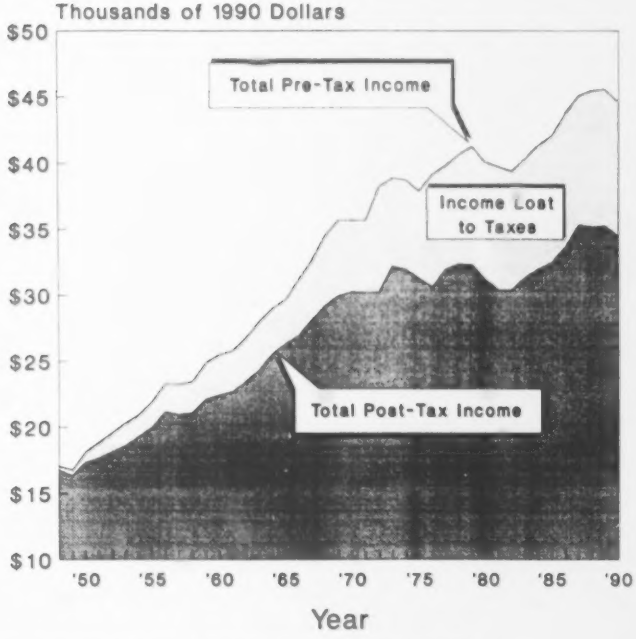
Chart 2
Federal Taxes as a Share of Median Family Income: 1948-1990



Note: Figures are for a median income family of four
Source: Heritage Tax Model, income data from U.S. Bureau of Census

Heritage DataCha

Chart 3
Income Lost to Federal Taxes for a Family of Four: 1948-1990



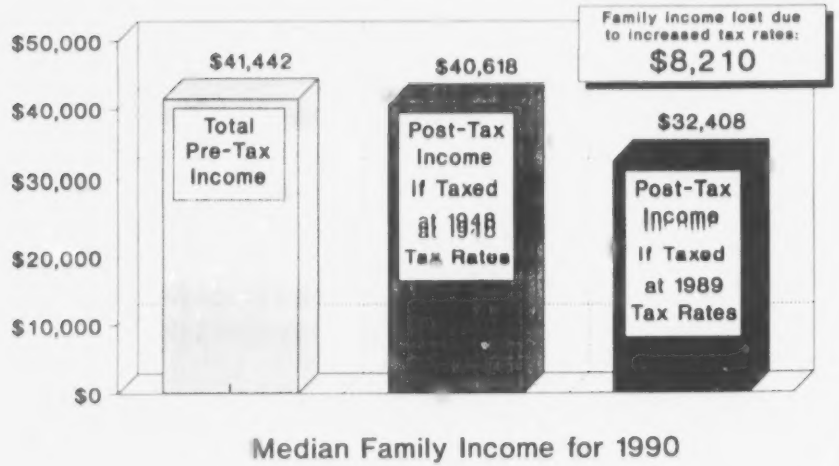
Note: Figures are for a median income family of four

Source: Heritage Tax Model, income data from U.S. Bureau of Census

Heritage DataChart

Chart 4

Effects of Increased Federal Taxes on Family Finances

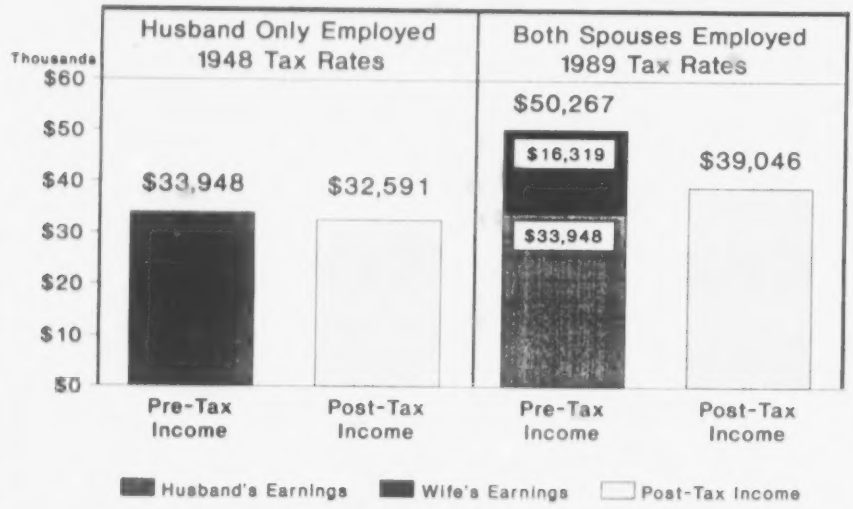


Median Family Income for 1990

Source: Heritage Tax Model, income data from U.S. Bureau of Census

Heritage DataChart

Chart 5
Rising Federal Taxes: Now Both Parents Must Work



Note: Average 1989 income. Pre-tax income includes employer share of Social Security.
Source: Heritage Tax Model, income data from U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Heritage DataChart

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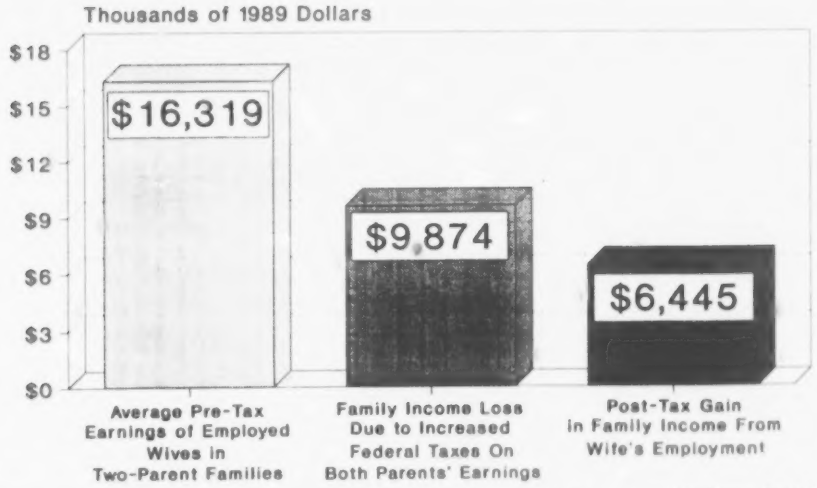
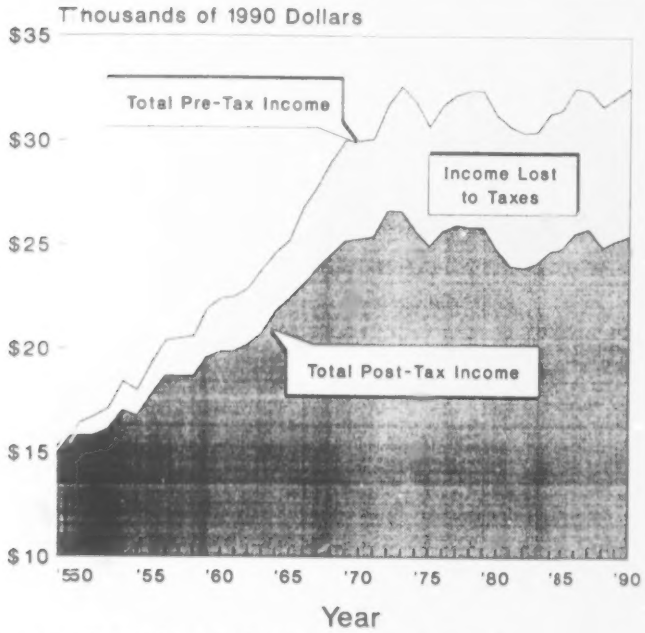
Chart 6

Working Wives: Uncle Sam - Not Family - Gains Most



Source: Heritage Tax Model, income data from U.S. Bureau of Census Heritage DataChart

Chart 7
Income Lost to Federal Taxes for Single-Earner Families: 1949-1990



Note: Figures are for a median income married couple family with wife not in the labor force.
Source: Heritage Tax Model, income data from U.S. Department of Census.

Heritage DataChart

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you very much.

Judith Weitz, we welcome you. Your statement is in the record, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF JUDITH WEITZ, KIDS COUNT COORDINATOR, THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY, WASHINGTON, DC.

Ms. WEITZ. Thank you very much.

I am the National Coordinator of KIDS COUNT, a joint project of the Anne E. Casey Foundation, which was started by the founders of the United Parcel Service, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy.

The goal of KIDS COUNT is to marshal information through annual benchmark reports on the condition of children, for three reasons: To create a deeper, broader and more urgent public sense and commitment to at-risk kids; to help policymakers and community leaders establish priorities and goals for helping kids and their families; and to create a basis for holding states, communities, institutions and citizens accountable for results for children.

At the national level, the principal activity of KIDS COUNT is the publication of the KIDS COUNT Data Book, which I hope you have all seen. The 1992 version will be out March 23rd. This report profiles what is happening to children in our nation and in each state. At the state level, there are currently 18 state KIDS COUNT projects, and the foundation hopes that by 1995 there will be projects in all 50 States and Washington, DC and that we will have a profile of how kids are doing in all 3,134 counties in the United States.

I was asked today to testify particularly on the KIDS COUNT poll that we released on January 8th. It was a national survey of registered voters on the impact of the nation's economic downturn on children and families. I should say it was a modest poll. We did not have Senator Rockefeller's budget. We only had five questions we could ask, so it is very narrow in its focus, and was not intended to explore in great detail all the variety of ways that families feel they could do better by their children.

This poll was designed, administered and analyzed by the Tarrance Group and Greenberg-Lake, the people that you heard from before, and I would suggest that any comments about the methodology of that poll be directed towards them.

The results of the KIDS COUNT poll confirm what you've heard many times here this morning: that a majority of American voters see kids as worse off today than a generation ago. That was true by a margin of 2-to-1. The responses varied for different groups—that is, more vulnerable people, such as low income voters or less educated voters, felt more strongly about this than voters who are better off.

When asked about the single biggest impact on children of the declining economy, more than anything else the poll revealed a concern over the diminished ability of many American families to meet the core needs of their children. Insufficient food, housing and clothing, for example, were most often cited as the greatest effect of the current recession on kids.

In addition, voters expressed concern over the deterioration of public school education because of budget cuts, and a concern that

kids were not receiving adequate medical attention because of inadequate health insurance coverage. I should note for you that we were asking people to comment on other children, not their own children.

And the last finding we had in this poll was, I think, some good news: As a nation we may be at last acknowledging the obligation for more effective responses to the urgent needs of today's families with children.

Our survey respondents indicated a readiness to support an array—and I emphasize an "array" because I think one of the problems with a hearing like this is, you have one person saying one thing and one person saying another, and you think that there is no common accord and no agreement. In fact, I think you would find, as I was listening to the variety of opinions, an enormous agreement among people on most of what has been said here today, and one of those things was picked in our survey, that people identified guaranteed health insurance for all kids as an important response, more family-oriented business practices as well; and a refundable tax credit, as all things that would help families, different families in different ways, but all important.

Again, voters wanted measures that speak to their own particular situations. For instance, working women were more oriented towards changed business policies for families. The strongest support for preschool, elementary and secondary school education came from voters with college degrees, et cetera.

Children are heavily represented in the casualty list of the nation's economic downturn. That doesn't mean that some children aren't doing very well. Many of them are. The family institution and family values are very strong. The question is: How can we keep it that way and help to increase parents' capacities to do what they want to do to help their children have the best possibilities. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Judith Weitz follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JUDITH H. WEITZ, KIDS COUNT COORDINATOR, CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY, WASHINGTON, DC

Chairwoman Schroeder, and members of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, my name is Judith Weitz. I am the national coordinator of KIDS COUNT, a joint project of The Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Center for the Study of Social Policy to profile the condition of America's children at the national, state, and community levels. Using the best available measures of child well-being, KIDS COUNT is premised on the belief that the more the public and policymakers know about the needs of children, the more likely we as a nation are to find the will and means to address them.

At the national level, the principal activity of this initiative is the publication and dissemination of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* which profiles state-by-state and national trends for select measures of child well-being. The third annual edition will be released March 23, 1992.

At the state level, The Annie E. Casey Foundation has funded eighteen projects to collect, analyze, and disseminate state and local data on the status of children and use that information strategically to improve children's chances. The Foundation's goal is to support KIDS COUNT projects in all fifty states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico so that by January 1995, KIDS COUNT profiles are available for all 3,134 counties in the United States.

On January 8, 1992, KIDS COUNT released the results of a national survey of registered voters on the impact of the nation's economic downturn on children and their families. This poll was designed, administered and analyzed by The Tarrance Group and Greenberg-Lake: The Analysis Group, Inc.

The results of the KIDS COUNT poll confirm that a majority of American voters see kids as worse off today than a generation ago. By a margin of two to one, they believe that children are worse off than when they were growing up. Not surprisingly, those most vulnerable to a recession's impact and those who come into the recession with the fewest resources - women, minorities, large city dwellers, less-educated and lower-income voters - believe more strongly that children are worse off. Voters who do not have children are even more likely than parents to believe that children are worse off (59 percent and 53 percent respectively).

The facts and figures in the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* document voters' perception that the condition of our children has eroded over the 1980s. For instance:

- Between 1980 and 1989, the percent of low birth weight births increased in thirty-four states and the District of Columbia, though infant mortality rates continued to improve overall.

- Over 76,000 more babies were born to single teens in 1989 than in 1980. By far the largest rise has come among white teens. There was a 42 percent increase in the number of babies born to white teenagers and a 31 percent increase in the white rate over the decade.

- Between 1984 and 1989, there was an 11 percent increase overall in the teen death rate from accidents, homicides, and suicides. Almost twice as many African-American teens ages 15-19 die in homicides as in accidents.

- Over the 1980s, the nation made no progress in the percent of ninth graders graduating from high school on time. While twenty-eight states made modest improvements, twenty-one states and the District of Columbia lost ground.

When asked about the biggest single impact on children of the declining economy, more than anything else our poll reveals a deep concern over the diminished ability of many American families to meet the core needs of their children. Insufficient food, housing, and clothing, for example, were most often cited as the greatest effect of the current recession on kids (25 percent).

These perceptions are rooted in real and measurable economic and demographic trends threatening family capacity. Indeed, between 1980 and 1990, the real median income of families with children fell 5 percent, while the costs of housing, health care, transportation and education rose. Minority incomes are substantially below white incomes and Hispanic families, in particular, lost ground during the decade; their median family income decreased by over 11 percent. The only families with children to make gains during the 1980s were those at the top of the income spectrum. Families with average median incomes of $35,000 or less experienced no growth or a loss of income.

In fact, child and family poverty exploded in the 1980s. The percent of children in poverty rose in forty states over the decade for a nationwide increase of 22 percent. In 1990, one in five, or 12.7 million children were poor, an increase of 2.7 million children from 1979.

In addition, voters expressed concern over the deterioration of public school education because of budget cuts (22 percent) and that children may not be receiving adequate medical attention because of inadequate health insurance coverage (18 percent).

Voters view of the greatest impact of the declining economy on children varied. More young voters (48 percent), suburban voters (46 percent) and voters without children (46 percent) worried about the declining quality of education because of budget cuts. More financially vulnerable Americans -- homemakers (49 percent), retired women (48 percent) and African-American voters (55 percent) -- were more concerned about meeting children's basic needs. Meanwhile, working women (42 percent) and college-educated women (44 percent) worried more about medical attention for children.

The good news in the survey may be less obvious, but it is there: as a nation, we may at last be acknowledging the obligation for more effective responses to the urgent needs of today's families with children. Our survey respondents indicated a voter readiness to support an array of better public and private responses to the changing needs of today's families. They identified, for instance, guaranteed health insurance for all children (26 percent); more family-oriented business practices (20 percent); and a refundable tax credit for families with children (18 percent) as policy options critical to protecting the futures of at-risk kids.

Naturally, voters want measures that speak to their own particular situations. While providing health insurance is a top priority across the board, it receives the greatest support from those who are most vulnerable to uninsuredness: low-income voters (33 percent of those with incomes below $10,000) and those with less than a high school education (31 percent). Working women most want family-oriented business policies (26 percent). The strongest support for preschool, elementary and secondary education comes from voters with college degrees (22 percent),

especially college educated men (23 percent).

Children are heavily represented in the casualty list of the nation's economic downturn. Our ability to help families provide kids the opportunities and support they need to prepare for a productive adulthood is threatened today. For the sake of children and our nation's future, this session of Congress and the 1992 elections must make children's issues the priority that voters are eager to give them.

NATIONAL STUDY II
FINAL

CHILDREN
THE TARRANCE GROUP
GREENBERG-LAKE
PERSONAL/CONFIDENTIAL

STUDY # 6221

Hello. I'm _____ of The Tarrance Group, a national research firm. We're calling from our national telephone center. We're talking to people in the nation today about public leaders and issues facing us all.

A. Are you registered to vote in your state and will you be able to vote in the election for President that will be held in November, 1992?

IF "NO", ASK: Is there someone else at home who is registered to vote? (IF "YES", THEN ASK: MAY I SPEAK WITH HIM/HER?)

Yes (CONTINUE)

No (THANK AND TERMINATE)

Thinking ahead to the elections to be held in November of 1992 --

1. Some people usually have the time to vote in every election, while others do not. What are the chances you will have the time to vote in the November elections in 1992? Are you certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50:50, or will you probably not have the time to vote in the November elections?

Certain to vote	61
Probably vote	13
50:50 chance	3
Probably not vote	1
UNSURE (DNR)	1

Thinking for a moment about children in America --

2. Generally, would you say that children in America today are better off or worse off than children were when you were growing up?

IF [GIVEN ANSWER]: And would you say that children today are much (better/worse) off or a little (better/worse) off?

Much better off	14
Little better off	16
UNSURE (DNR)	16
Little worse off	24
Much worse off	31

Still thinking about children for a moment --

3. Would you say that the programs and resources for children in your community and in schools have gotten better or worse over the last five years?

IF [GIVEN ANSWER]: And would you say that they have gotten much (better/worse) or a little (better/worse)?

Much better	17
Little better	31
UNSURE (DNR)	17
Little worse	17
Much worse	18

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kids count

Now, still thinking about children, I'd like to try something a little different. A lot of people in America say that the economy is in trouble, and that this is having an impact on families and their children.

I'm going to read you a list of statements describing some of the ways that people think the declining economy has had the greatest impact on children. Please listen as I read the list and tell me which one statement best says how you feel about the affects of the declining economy on children. Here's the first one ... (READ AND ROTATE) IF CHOICE MADE, ASK: And which statement describes how the declining economy has had the next biggest affect on children?

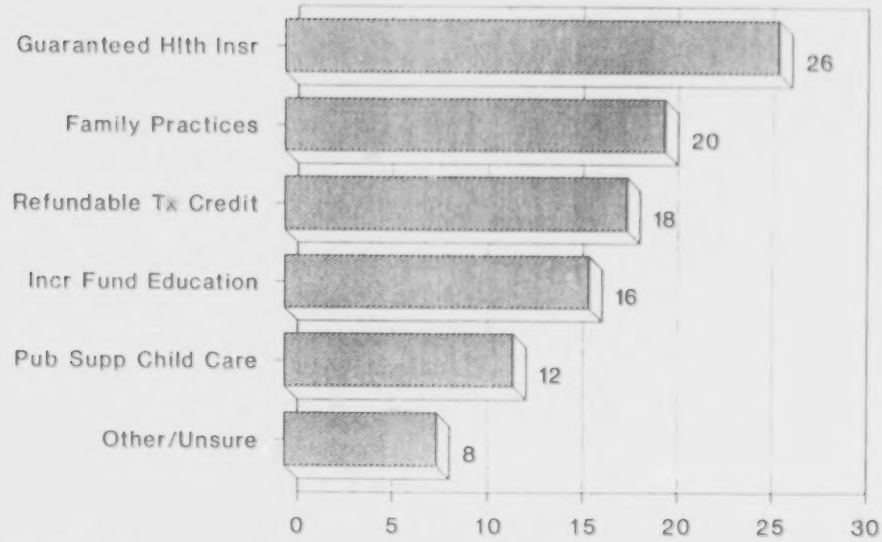
		Q4 The Biggest Effect	Q5 Next Biggest Effect
1)	More children don't have basics like sufficient food, clothing or housing in safe neighborhoods.	25	14
2)	Children have fewer school and community activities because programs have been cut back or activity fees are too expensive.	10	14
3)	More children don't have adequate health insurance and may not get the medical attention they need.	18	17
4)	More working parents can't afford acceptable child care and after school care for their children.	14	16
5)	Public school education is deteriorating because of budget cuts.	22	19
6)	OTHER (SPECIFY) (DNR)	1	1
7)	UNSURE (DNR)	9	20

(END ROTATION)

Now, I'm going to read you a list of measures that some people have said might be taken to relieve the burden on children and their families in these tough economic times. Please listen as I read the list and tell me which one of the measures you think would make the most difference to children and their families. Here's the first one ... (READ AND ROTATE)

		Q6 Most Difference
1)	A refundable tax credit for families with children.	18
2)	Increased spending for preschool, elementary and secondary education.	16
3)	Guaranteed health insurance for all children.	24
4)	Publicly-supported child care and after-school programs.	12
5)	More family-oriented practices by businesses, such as family and medical leave, and flexible working hours.	20
6)	OTHER (SPECIFY) (DNR)	3
7)	UNSURE (DNR)	6

Support For Measures To Relieve The Burden On Children



Greenberg-Lake/
The Tarrance Group

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you very much, and we really appreciate that.

Dr. Duncan, we're counting on you for the historic perspective overview, that you're going to tie this all together. So, your statement is in the record, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF GREG J. DUNCAN, PH.D., PROGRAM DIRECTOR, SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR, MI

Dr. DUNCAN. Thank you very much, it's a pleasure to be here. Let me try to give a very brief summary of my written testimony.

By all accounts, the number of middle-income families has declined over the last ten to 15 years. Some commentators celebrate this fact, arguing that the boom years of the 1980s have lifted large numbers of middle-income families into the ranks of the upper-income group. Other commentators lament the demise of the middle class, arguing that problems with unemployment and low wages have caused a great deal of downward mobility, where increasing numbers of middle-income families are falling into low-income status.

I would like to summarize some research regarding the middle class—where it's gone, why, and what can be done about it.

Everyone has his own definition of middle class. The heart of the middle class, heart of the income distribution for families with children, is about $37,000 now, a figure that surprises all the journalists I talk with who think that their high incomes put them into the heart of the middle class.

Our study defined the middle class as families with kids, whose after-tax incomes, including food stamps, were in the range of $22,000 to $66,000. Roughly 30 percent of families with kids have incomes below $22,000 today. Roughly 10 percent have incomes above $66,000, leaving 60 percent of the families in this middle class definition that I've described. So, I'm not talking about poverty. I'm putting the lower bound of the middle class at about twice the poverty line.

The snapshot pictures of the middle class between the late 1970s and the late 1980s show falling numbers. With our data, the fraction of middle-income families falls from about 70 percent to 60 percent, from the late 1970s to the late 1980s, with corresponding increases both in the number of low-income families and high-income families.

What we were able to do with our study, which is called the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, and has followed a representative sample of families for 25 years now, was to look at transitions, income transitions, up and out of the middle class, down into the middle class from above, up into the middle class from below, and down and out of the middle class into low-income status. So, we were following the same families over time, and trying to see whether the transition rates, whether upward mobility and downward mobility patterns were different in the 1980s versus the 1970s, to try to get some handle on where the middle class has gone.

In my testimony there is a Figure 1, which summarizes evidence on transitions out of the middle class for families with kids. The right half of this figure shows the good news. The fraction of middle-income families who moved up and out of the middle class, obtaining high-income status—in other words, their incomes crossed the $66,000 line—jumped up sharply between the 1970s and 1980s. But at the same time, the fraction of middle-income families that crossed the lower threshold, fell out of the middle class into low-income status, also jumped up sharply. So, both forces were at work to almost equal degrees.

So while a number of middle-income families were finding it easier to ascend into high income status, at the same time middle-income families were also, in larger numbers, falling out of middle income into lower-income status.

Figure 2 shows the transitions into middle-income status. Not only did high-income families have an easier time maintaining high-income status in the 1980s compared to the 1970s, but one of the saddest facts from our study was that mobility of especially young families into middle-income from low-income status, was much less in the 1980s than it was in the 1970s. So, a typical, especially young family, with children, was much less likely to ascend into middle income status in the 1980s than had been the case in the 1970s.

So, the picture is decidedly one of a balance between good news and bad news. It was certainly the case that mobility into the upper-income category was higher during the '80s, but at the same time mobility out and down from the middle-income group was higher as well in the 1980s, and mobility up into the middle class was lower.

The net result of these forces which are splitting apart the middle income group, is to decrease greatly the number of middle income families.

In Figure 3, I present data on what's happened to family wealth between the mid and late 1980s, classifying families according to their income level. Wealth is defined as the sum of all the assets that families have, except for pension wealth—money they have in their house, money they have in cars, money they have in savings accounts, in IRAs, and so forth.

What you can see is that high-income families enjoyed a spectacular increase in their net worth from 1984 to 1989, almost doubling their real net worth from about $170,000 to over $300,000. I'm referring to the median net worth of high-income families in 1984 and 1989.

Middle-income families had an increase in net worth that was about one-tenth the size of the increase for high-income families, and low-income families had a decline in their net worth from about $3,700 to $3,100.

In short, there were highly divergent paths for middle-class families in the 1980s compared to before. Families with incomes above the median, above $35,000, and especially those with college degrees, because college degrees were very strong correlates of these favorable transitions, did very well indeed. Their income increased and their wealth grew correspondingly.

The 1990s bode reasonably well for such people in the upper part of the income distribution, upper-middle-class families. The current recession is certainly causing problems, and there will be some temporary setbacks as restructuring takes place. But, by and large, families earning above $40,000, and especially those where there is a college degree, probably have relatively little to fear during the 1990s.

In contrast, lower-middle-class families, and especially families where there is no college degree, did much, much worse. Their chance of downward mobility increased substantially and, sadly enough, young families had substantially lower chances of ascending into the middle class in the 1980s than before.

Lurking behind these trends is an enormous increase in the inequality of earned income in the United States. It's really been a very dramatic development. If you compare the earnings of college graduates relative to high school graduates, that gap was much, much larger in the late 1980s than it was in the late 1970s. Similarly, the gap between experienced workers, older workers and younger workers was very, very large.

For better or for worse, this growing inequality cannot be attributed to the Reagan Administration, because it started in the late 1970s, before the Reagan Administration took office, and it shows up in almost equal measure in Canada and in European countries as well.

So, there has been what some have termed a "tidal wave" of inequality in earned income that has affected not only the United States, but all of the rest of the Western developed countries as well.

My policy recommendations are at the end of my testimony. First, we have to be very concerned with trying to reverse the effects of this inequality in wage distribution, and the only credible long-run strategy for that is to concentrate on the skills of American workers.

I'm glad Jason has left because I would recommend that we upgrade the basic skills we provide to our high school students, including mathematical skills. [Laughter]

Those who have high school degrees and don't go on for further schooling need more such skills, even to fill the factory jobs of the 1990s and into the 21st century.

A shorter-run set of policies that we should be concerned with involve income-tax relief for the portion of the middle class that needs it the most—families with incomes below $40,000. I would argue that a test for the adequacy of such policies is for the dollar value of the benefits from a proposal to be at least as large for families with incomes below $40,000 as families with incomes above $40,000.

I would agree with Mr. Rector that a tax credit makes a lot more sense than an increased personal exemption. In contrast to him, however, I would make it refundable rather than non-refundable, so that we can provide tax relief to the working poor as well as to working-class and lower-middle class families. Thank you very much.

[Prepared statement of Greg Duncan, Ph.D., follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GREG J. DUNCAN, PH.D., SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR, MI

I wish to thank Chairwoman Schroeder and the members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify before you today. My statement will focus on recent trends in the economic position of middle-class American families with children.

The Disappearing Middle Class

By nearly any measure, the size of America's middle class is smaller today than 15 years ago. If we take Census Bureau data for 1978 and 1990, and adjust the 1978 incomes to the 1990 price level, we find that the fraction of families with children with incomes between $20,000 and $50,000 fell by 11%, with corresponding increases in both the number of families with income below $20,000 and those above $50,000.[1] A debate is raging over the meaning of these changes.

Some commentators argue that we should celebrate the decline of America's middle class since it reflects a boom not bust, as a product of the growth years of the 1980s that saw many formerly middle-income families graduate to the ranks of the affluent.

A more pessimistic view is that the middle class is shrinking because increasing numbers of workers are losing good jobs and facing unemployment or, at best, a disastrous skid to lower-paying jobs.

A recent study I conducted with Timothy Smeeding and Willard Rodgers investigated this question for the Jerome Levy Economics Institute.[2] In contrast to most income studies, we were able to follow the same families over time and observe income changes -- up and down -- over the past two decades to address the following kinds of questions: Has it become easier for the middle-class to become affluent? Are increasing numbers of middle-income families with children "falling from grace" -- that is, down and out of the middle class? If so, who are they and what events are linked to their income losses? Is mobility up into the middle class declining?

We find considerable evidence to support both the optimistic and pessimistic views. Well-to-do families have, by and large, enjoyed large gains in income and wealth. But at the same time, lower-middle-class families face an increasing threat of downward mobility. And low-income families with children are less likely to rise into the middle class than before. The net results of these trends is a United States that is much more polarized economically now than at any time in the recent past.

Data

We drew our data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, a survey project conducted at the University of Michigan that has tracked the changing fortunes of a nationally representative set of families over the period from 1967 to 1989. Income trends shown in this study are virtually identical to those found in U.S. Census Bureau surveys such as the Current Population Survey.

The measure of family income we used differs somewhat from what typically appears in Census Bureau reports in that it includes the value of food stamps and subtracts out Federal Income and Social Security payroll taxes. Our definition of middle-income set the

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lower boundary at about $22,000 in today's (after-tax) dollars and the upper boundary at about $66,000. If applied today, these income boundaries would classify roughly 30% of U.S. families with children as "low income" and 10% as "high income", leaving about 60% in the middle.

We focused on income transitions across the upper and lower boundaries of the middle class. Families were considered to have changed income groups if, over a five-year period, their after-tax family income exceeded or fell below the middle-income levels of $22,000 and $66,000.

More families moving into affluence...

Figure 1 shows the fraction of middle-income families with children dropping down and out of the middle-class and climbing into affluence. On the positive side, we found that more middle-income American families with children became affluent during the 1980s than before. Before 1980, an average of 5.8% of the middle class achieved upper-income status over any given five-year period. In the 1980s this average jumped to 6.8%. This difference persisted even after adjustments for changes in the demographic composition of families and macroeconomic conditions.

While an increase of this magnitude (i.e., 1%) may seem small, it translates into about 200,000 more families in a given year ascending into affluence and many times that number of families if the higher transition rate is sustained over a period of several years. This improvement, when coupled with a falling percentage of high-income families dropping into the middle class (Figure 2), added more than 1 million of America's 34 million families with children to the ranks of the affluent between the late 1970s and late 1980s.

But at the same time less mobility at the bottom.

But the bad news is that more American families with children fell from the middle into low-income status, and it became more difficult for low-income families to climb into the middle class. During the years between 1967 and 1980, 8.5% of middle-income individuals fell into the lower-income group over a typical five-year period. After 1980, this number had increased to 9.8%.

An even larger -- and also unfavorable -- change took place in the extent of upward mobility of America's low-income families with children. Prior to 1980 an extraordinary fraction -- some 35.1% -- of low-income families with children typically made the transition into the middle-income group. Upward mobility was much less in the 1980s; the fraction of low-income families making the transition fell to 24.6%. As with the favorable transitions, these differences in transition rates across the lower boundary of the middle class before and after 1980 persisted after adjustments for changes in the demographic composition of families and macroeconomic conditions.

These two unfavorable changes helped swell the ranks of the low-income families with children by about 2 million between the late 1970s and late 1980s.

When taken together, changes in the four kinds of transitions involving the middle

class produced a drop from about 70% to 60% in the share of families with children in the (post-tax) income range of $22,000 to $66,000 between the late 1970s and late 1980s.

Changes in wealth, 1984-1989

A look at recent changes in the wealth of low, middle and high-income Americans shows that here the paths of America's middle class diverge even more sharply. Using the same data source and a comparable definition of income classes, we compared the net worth of all adults between the ages of 25 and 50 (including adults not living in families with children) in 1984 and 1989, with the results shown in Figure 3.

Adults whose average incomes between 1984 and 1989 placed them in high-income status enjoyed a spectacular increase in wealth. Their net worth nearly doubled between 1984 and 1989, increasing from $167,700 to $305,400. This increase was equally divided between housing wealth and wealth held in other forms. The increase in the wealth of typical middle-income adults was only one-tenth that of high-income adults, from about $39,900 to $54,300. Low-income adults saw their wealth fall from $3,700 to $3,100. A more detailed look showed that the increases in wealth were generally limited to families with incomes above $35,000 -- roughly the median income of families with children.

In short, changes in wealth reflect and exceed the divergent income trends of upper and lower-income families.

Why were the 1980s different?

When we examine the family income transitions, we see that virtually all of them were caused by the changing work hours and earnings of parents. Promotions, lucrative job changes and other boosts to the earnings of fathers were the key ingredient in many of the transitions up and out of the middle class. Unemployment and other reductions in the work hours of both fathers and mothers accounted for many of the transitions across the lower boundary of the middle class.

A fundamental cause of these patterns is the growing inequality of earned income in the United States. Numerous studies of the labor market have documented an increasing gap in the earned income of more highly-skilled and experienced workers relative to the less skilled and less experienced. What some have called a "tidal wave of inequality" is as prevalent among the most favored group in the labor market -- white men -- as among women and minority workers.

The earnings trends appear to have little to do with demographic or cyclical economic factors. Nor can they be attributed, for better or for worse, to policies enacted during the Reagan presidency, since they began several years before Reagan's election and similar changes have taken place in Canada and European. Global economic forces lie behind them, probably rooted in technological changes in the work place.

These earnings trends are reflected in the income transitions of the families with children we studied. In particular, favorable family income transitions were especially frequent among adults with college degrees during the 1980s. But at the same time the lower

earnings of less experienced workers showed up in the form of blocked mobility for young households. Prior to 1980, being young was an advantage for families hoping to lift themselves into the middle class. During the 1980s, this advantage had disappeared, which helped contribute to the shrinking number of low-income families with children rising into the middle class.

What is to be done?

At the risk of oversimplification, recent trends regarding middle-class income can be summarized as follows: the economic fortunes of middle-class families over the past decade followed two highly divergent paths. Families in the upper half of the income distribution, with incomes above $35,000 and with college degree-holding parents did very well indeed. Upward mobility was easier for them in the 1980s than in the 1970s and their incomes and wealth grew correspondingly. Although the current recession has induced in many of them a sense of economic vulnerability, and post-recession industrial restructuring may cause temporary hardship for some, there are relatively few dark clouds on their economic horizons for the years ahead.

In sharp contrast, the economic aspirations of many families in the bottom half of the income distribution, in particular young families just starting out and lacking college degrees, have been increasingly thwarted. When compared with the 1970s, more dropped out of the middle-class during the 1980s, and fewer succeeded in climbing into the middle-class from below. As a result they were much less likely than higher-income families to accumulate wealth. The fundamentally worse earnings prospects of less-skilled workers suggest that the economic problems of this group will persist during the 1990s.

What is to be done? The recession has focused our attention on jobs, but the crucial policy issues are longer-term investments in work-related skills and the shorter-run package of taxes and benefits extended to working and lower-middle class families with children.

Regarding skills, it is clear that high-paying factory jobs for high school dropouts are a thing of the past. Since the dwindling number of manufacturing jobs opening up to high school graduates will require increasing analytic sophistication, we need to ensure that our high schools are providing such skills to future generations of parents. The high payoff to two and, especially, four-year college degrees is a signal that the post-recession labor market of the 1990s and beyond is going to demand the technical skills of as many college graduates as we can produce. A more immediate benefit would come from assisting unemployed parents who do not have the necessary skills by offering a program of extended unemployment benefits that target re-employment and training efforts.

In thinking of prudent tax and benefit policies, it is instructive to remember that the underlying economic forces leading to a decline in the size of America's middle-class are just as pervasive in Canada and Europe. But in those countries, similar increases in the inequality of earned income have not translated into as much additional inequality in the distribution of total family income in the United States. Each has its own unique package of redistributive taxes and transfers, some of which are clearly distasteful to the American

palate. Common to all, however, is a more comprehensive set of universal programs directed at families with children.

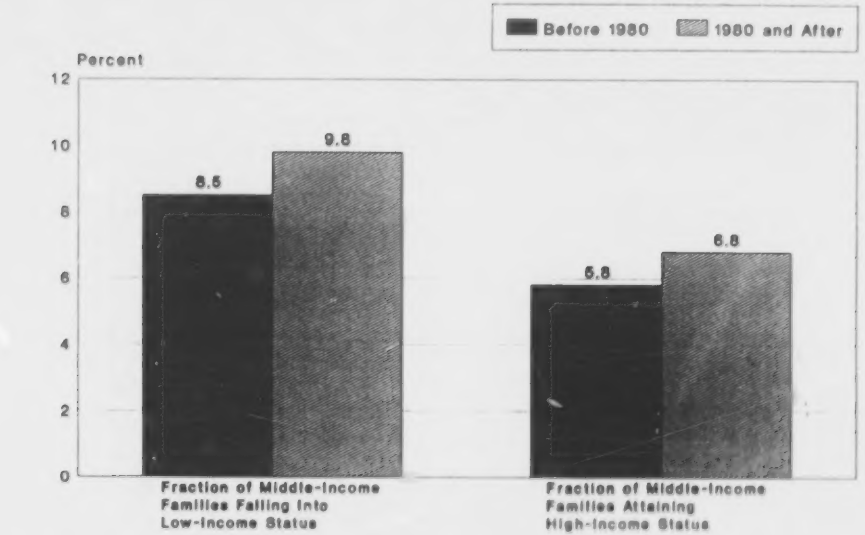
If we want to focus resources on middle-class families with children who need it the most, then we should ensure that the dollar value of tax relief and other benefits extended to such families is at least as large as that received by the more affluent. Raising exemptions fails this test since taxpayers in higher tax brackets benefit more than lower-middle-class taxpayers. A refundable child income tax credit of, say, $800 would not only provide vital resources to families near the lower boundary of the middle class, but also lift most working poor families out of poverty. When combined with investments in the skills of American workers, such a tax credit would help concentrate resources on the most vulnerable middle-class families and extend the chance for upward mobility to all income groups.

Notes

1. In 1978, the fractions of families with children with incomes below $20,000, $20,000-$50,000, $50,000-$100,000 and above $100,000 (in 1990 prices) were .226, .496, .244 and .034, respectively. The corresponding fractions in 1990 were .272, .443, .241 and .044, respectively. The figures for 1978, when the price level was almost exactly half of its 1990 level, come from P-60, No. 123, Table 24. The figures for 1990 come from the Census Bureau's P-60, No. 174, Table 18.

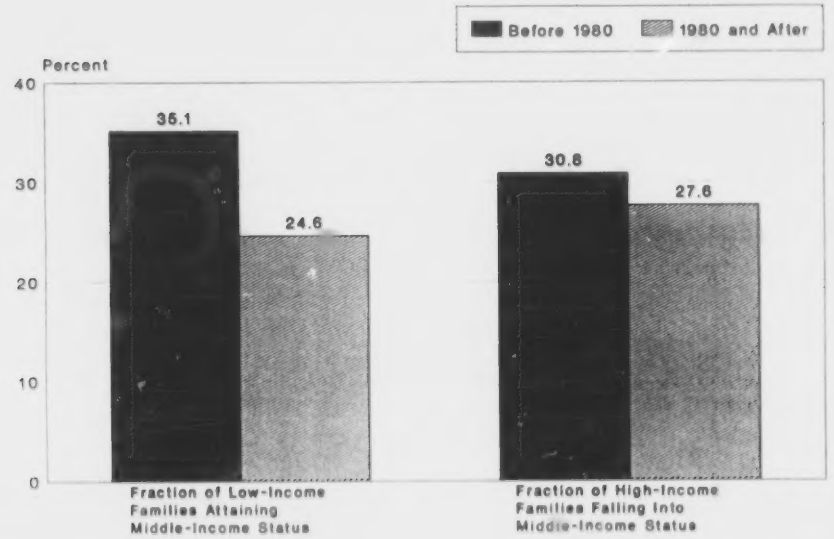
2. "W(h)ither the Middle Class?", by Greg J. Duncan, Timothy Smeeding and Willard Rodgers, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, 1991.

FIGURE 1: Transitions OUT of Middle-Income for Families with Children



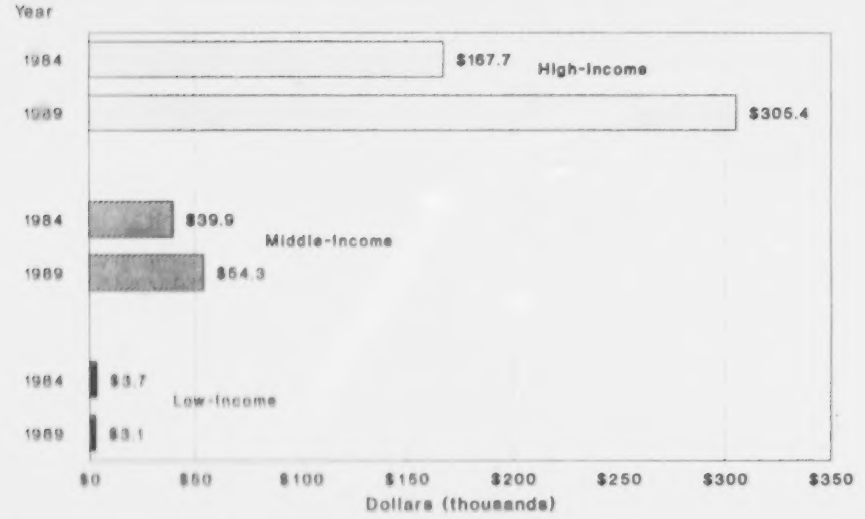
"Middle-income" is defined by post-tax family income in the range $22,000-$66,000 (1991$).
Source: Panel Study of Income Dynamics

FIGURE 2: Transitions INTO Middle-Income for Families with Children



"Middle-Income" is defined by post-tax family income in the range $22,000-$66,000 (1991$).
Source: Panel Study of Income Dynamics

FIGURE 3: Median Net Worth by Income Class, 1984 and 1989, for Adults Age 25-50 in 1984



Source: Panel Study of Income Dynamics

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you very much, and I sincerely mean this when I say I want to thank the panel for their incredible patience. I know it's been a long day and a long sit, and we really, really appreciate that.

Congressman McEwen, do you have any questions?

Mr. MCEWEN. Thank you, yes, I do. Thank you also. I agree with the Chairwoman, I am grateful for your testimony.

Dr. Duncan, if I could begin by underscoring something you said at the very tail end about the high income of the new workers. Much was made in the 1980s that somehow or another these jobs that were created were just hamburger-flipping jobs. That seemed to be the sexy statement, but the truth of the matter was, as you said—in fact, I majored in economics, and it's been said that an economist is someone who is good with numbers but didn't have the personality to be an accountant. So, I've memorized these, in fact, that in the four categories of income, in every post-war expansion, 24 percent were usually in the high income category, but in this expansion, from '82 to '90, 47 percent of the new jobs created, or nearly half, were in that top income category. And, of course, now with the recession, those are exactly the ones that are being last-in/first-out, and that's why we're seeing that, because those new jobs created were not hamburger-flipping jobs by any stretch—in fact, the bottom fourth were only 7 percent. Ninety-three percent were in the middle- or upper-income category. Hence, the importance of education because the new jobs that are being created are not the simple little jobs, they are jobs in which you must be sophisticated in order to operate. And so I hope it would lay to rest that somehow America was not creating any significant contribution to our society, because it was very much so.

The other questions I have have to do directly with our analysis of what's happening to the middle class, and I will use as my guide here the report from the Joint Economic Committee, and would like you to respond piece-by-piece to say where you differ, and it seems to be somewhat.

For example, here they used $15,000 for the lowest third, and you used $12,000, I believe.

Dr. DUNCAN. I used $22,000, post-tax.

Mr. MCEWEN. And they had a percentage of Americans in that category in 1980 was 18.8, and at the end of the decade it had gone from 18.8 to 18, so it was slightly diminished.

The middle class, however, went from 57 percent in 1980 to 52 percent. $15,000–$50,000 was the Joint Economic Committee report definition. However, those over $50,000 had gone from 22 percent to 30 percent. So, in other words, slight diminishing in the bottom third, significant diminishing in the middle income, but they didn't go down, they went up. Any analysis of that?

Dr. DUNCAN. In my testimony, there is a footnote at the very end that shows figures from the Census Bureau, for income of families with children. I'm not sure if the Joint Economic Committee concerned itself with families with children or all individuals.

Mr. MCEWEN. It says percent of families by income group.

Dr. DUNCAN. Okay, so that would include families without children. If you look at my note, if you draw the line at $20,000 for low income, what you find is that the fraction of families with children

with incomes below $20,000 increased from 22.6 percent to 27.2 percent.

The $20,000 to $50,000 range, the drop was from 49.6 percent to 44.3 percent. The range from $50,000–$100,000 didn't change very much, it was 24.4 percent to 24.1 percent, and then the fraction of families with kids with incomes above $100,000 increased from 3.4 percent to 4.4 percent.

Mr. MCEWEN. I don't see the divergence—of course, you're using median and I'm using averages.

Dr. DUNCAN. No, no, we're both talking about fractions of families. I'm talking about fractions of families with kids in different income categories. So, there was an increase at the top, an increase at the bottom, and fewer families in the middle.

Mr. MCEWEN. The increase at the bottom was less than 1 percent, right, as I recall?

Dr. DUNCAN. Well, with families with children and $20,000 as the line, the increase is from 22.6 percent up to 27.2 percent, so it was a substantial 5 percentage point increase in the fraction of families with kids with incomes below $20,000.

Mr. MCEWEN. All right. I appreciate your putting that in. The reason that I find all this very knowledgeable is because we've recently had some discussion here about the downturn of the 1980s and how the family income was diminished—in fact, this has been on the floor many times, and what I discovered was rather interesting, why we chose '79 to '89, and the reason we chose '79 to '89 was because the real number looked like this. And, true, when you go from there to there, you find diminishment, but in order to get the numbers that we're seeking, we have to come up with this, and that is, in our figures we have this collapse, we had an increase in the late '70s—it takes two years to turn the economy around, good or bad—and by the time you get it turned around it's '79, then you've got it down with a vengeance, so that's '79 and '80, it takes two years to turn it around, by the time you get down to '82 and you start to go back up.

So, the definition as to what happened in the '80s has always been from these figures that use '79, when the truth of the matter is it ought to be from about '82 on, because that's where we get the trend and what the impact was. And before we draw any conclusions from that first one, we will end up coming out exactly the opposite.

Mr. RECTOR. If I could add to that, it's also you're dealing with pre-tax income. If you deal with post-tax income, as I've done in this chart here, the situation is much dramatically better for the increase in post-tax family income during the 1980s relative to the '70s.

The fact of the matter is that in the 1970s, of every $1 of real family income, real increase in family income after inflation, the Federal Government took 66 cents during the course of the decade. They let people keep virtually nothing.

So, to just talk about we did this in pre-tax income and this in pre-tax income in the '80s is very misleading because, in fact, tax policy was not good, but it was a lot less punitive in the '80s than it was in the '70s.

Dr. DUNCAN. If I could respond briefly, I think it's fairest to compare conditions when the economy was in roughly the same state, and that's why comparisons are often made between the late '70s and the late '80s because those were more or less the peaks of the business cycles. So, that's why I've chosen to make my comparisons between the late '70s and late '80s. One always gets a substantial improvement when you go from the depths of a recession to the peak of an expansion.

But one final point, I don't think we should be talking so much about the median here and whether it's gone up or down because the median doesn't tell the story. What's telling the story is really the share of families with children with incomes in some middle-income range. And whether on average they've gone up some or down some is much less important than what's happened to the dispersion of experiences, of economic experiences. That's the inequality that we're talking about. You find a very good-news part of the story with high-income families increasing—I don't disagree with that at all. But at the same time, at the very same time, you're getting an increase in the extent of downward mobility among families with kids. So, it's half good news and half bad news.

Mr. MCEWEN. Which relates directly to the increase in single-family heads of households that we were talking about earlier.

Dr. DUNCAN. If I could comment on that. The rise of single-parent families is very important in accounting for the increase in children's poverty. There's no doubt about that. But in drawing the line at $22,000 post-tax, I'm drawing a line that's twice as high as poverty, more or less, and the kinds of patterns that I'm talking about are affected very little by changes in female headship in families. The changes in these transition rates, the increase in downward mobility, and the increase in upward mobility for that matter, are largely independent of changes in family structure that took place during the '70s and '80s. That's not true for the changes in the poverty rate, but it is when you up the line to about $20,000–$25,000.

Mr. MCEWEN. Are you a statistician or an economist?

Dr. DUNCAN. I'm one of those economists who maybe should have been an accountant.

Mr. MCEWEN. Why does the Joint Economic Committee come to such different conclusions?

Dr. DUNCAN. Well, I don't think all economists agree with one another about their conclusions. With this research, it's been very interesting because I've gotten more——

Mr. MCEWEN. Who financed that, by the way?

Dr. DUNCAN. The Jerome Levy Institute of Economics, of Bard College. It's research that I conducted jointly with Tim Smeeding and Willard Rodgers, and it's a secondary analysis of this dataset that I work on.

It's been fascinating. I've been producing research findings for 20 years now, but this research has generated much more interest among journalists because it really hits a nerve. The nerve I think it hits is vulnerability. Half of the journalists, half of the columnists who have written about this have emphasized the good news. I don't want to deny that there is definitely a very good news por-

tion of this result. Middle-income families indeed found it easier to ascend into high-income status during the 1980s, but the other half focused on the bad news part of it, and you can't tell the story without telling both sides.

Mr. MCEWEN. Do you have a recommendation?

Dr. DUNCAN. Well, my recommendation is to, first, think about what we can do to address this long-run increase in inequality in the earned-income distribution, not through redistribution directly, but rather trying to build up the skills of the American work force. I think that's clearly the long-run solution that we should focus on.

The shorter-run tax relief side of it, I think, is that we need to concentrate our resources on the middle-class families that are hurting the most, families with incomes below the median, $37,000. So, I would have this test for the dollar value of benefits being at least as large for those families as for families with incomes above $30,000. Raising the exemption doesn't do that, a refundable credit would.

Mr. MCEWEN. You said one thing about the single family, though——

Dr. DUNCAN. I said the increase——

Mr. MCEWEN. The response was such that you said it didn't impact, basically.

Dr. DUNCAN. It has a very big impact on the growth of poverty. It has a very small impact on the middle class trends that I'm talking about.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. In other words, very few single female heads of families are making $20,000-some after taxes?

Dr. DUNCAN. Relatively few.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. So you're not counting them.

Dr. DUNCAN. It's a much more important problem at $10,000 than it is at $20,000.

Mr. RECTOR. But wouldn't an increase in the divorce rate and the number of single parents push more families down below the $24,000 level?

Dr. DUNCAN. If you look at these transitions, what you find is that by and large they take place among two-parent families, and for the most part they are linked to the earnings and work hours of the fathers, rather than family structure changes.

So, it's not insignificant, but it's just not as important as the labor-market developments that I talked about.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you. Congressman Holloway?

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and I appreciate your bearing with us and allowing us the time we need for questions, and I appreciate the panel here waiting and being patient with us and giving it, because I think it is very important, what we've heard today.

I'd like to start with Mr. Blankenhorn, and basically we touched on a basis that we shouldn't be talking about traditional value of families, you know, we should talk about all families, so I guess I would want you to do that, yet I do think traditional values have an impact on what we are hoping to accomplish in this country.

So, I'd just like a little—you seem to have put most of your expertise toward this field. Are the families gone to hell and back? Are we gone and we can't come back? What's your opinion of

where we're at with families in this country, and what can happen with families in this country?

Mr. BLANKENHORN. Well, my basic point was really kind of a simple one in that I think that we, in Washington and in the policy analysis community, tend to look at this problem a little bit differently than the American people do. There are two different conversations going on out there.

At the top level of policy analysis, in the media, and so on, we tend to look at the problem principally in economic and policy terms. In the grass roots conversation, people tend to talk in cultural terms. They tend to talk about the problems of divorce, family time, the problems of single-parent homes and so on.

So, the main point of my testimony really was to say that I believe that the policy community, which really does tend to think in terms of programs and economic trends, if you really are interested in what the American people are saying about family well being, you have to shift over as well into these cultural value issues. And I realize that that presents a problem for people in your position because you are in the policy business, and yet you are dealing with matters that essentially can only be indirectly affected by policy. And yet there are some important areas such as marriage, such as family time, such as neighborhood safety, that I think you could show some important leadership in.

So, my assessment of things, I believe, based on a number of the leading family indicators, is that family well being is declining, it is getting harder to be a child today, parents who are good parents today tend to think of themselves as doing something that's against the culture.

So, we have a very serious problem on our hand with the family getting weaker as an institution in our society, and if we're going to grapple with it, if you who are in the power and the policy field are going to grapple with it, there is no shortcut. I believe you have to grapple not simply with the economics and programmatic issues at stake, but also with the cultural and value issues at stake.

So, if there was one message I wanted to get across, it's that. And that would bring the conversation more in line with what you actually get if you sit at the kitchen table with people and ask them "What's going on with your family, what are you worried about?"

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Going from there, I'd like to basically just—I'm going to skip Robert for just a second—and say, on your poll—you know, and I'll associate it with what people think of congressmen, everybody likes their congressman and thinks he's fine, but they think Congress as a whole stinks.

So, I guess I'd say to ask the family what you think of their family, you'd get a different answer than if you asked them totally what they think about the others, because they'd probably think every other family stinks because they're looking at the problems out there with juveniles and everything else, but I guess that would be—my answer would be, what kind of facts do you think you would really get that you could grab hold of, asking the question the way it was asked.

Ms. WEITZ. Well, I'm sorry you didn't ask the pollsters this question. I think any pollster would tell you, you always get higher numbers when you ask somebody about their own environment,

whether it's their own congressman or their own family or their own school, and the number is always more negative when it is somebody else's problem.

Actually, we did mix the questions. In some cases, we did ask people about the resources for their own children. In other cases, we were trying to see how they perceived the world around them. In that sense, our poll differed from the Commission's poll, which really asked people much more about their own family life. We wanted to find out how to perceive the future for themselves and for their children and the broader community in which they live, is also a reality in their lives. So, I think we did learn something by seeing how voters feel about a broader group of children than those in their own home and neighborhoods.

Mr. HOLLOWAY. I guess I'd like to go from there to Mr. Rector and say, I spoke earlier, but judging from your testimony and knowing you as I know you, you do have a tremendous interest in tax credits and toward taxes for families, and a very, very influential part of Heritage that worked with us on developing a bill on tax credits for families and child care, and I'd have to say the two people that were here as witnesses are probably the two most influential on my part of developing the bill, and I do appreciate you on that part.

And I think we all have to realize the value that we have to look at toward the deductions and what we get today, and what they were worth 30 years ago, or 40 years ago, and a family is strapped, and I think anything that we can do to allow that mother—I don't say to tell her or to even encourage her—I think to allow her to be at home more hours, I think we have to do. Or, I say to mothers so often today, it could be either way really, very much so. And I think it's valuable either way, I think the mother plays the role, but I appreciate your work and your testimony and people like yourself that's willing to fight the issue here, and that we don't always look.

We talked earlier about voting against programs because someone recommended them as not being—too, I think we could balance the budget if we'd cut all the programs around here that don't work, or that people comment that don't work. So, I think that's one of the issues we have to face.

But I just want to say to all of you, thank you, and I think it's very valuable, the figures that we get, and I think we could spend years going through the figures we've looked at today from testimony and what it does, but thanks very much for your testimony.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you.

Dr. Duncan, I think your testimony, I would call it kind of the "middle class meltdown", which is pretty frightening because it is the traditional value that people are talking about, the two-parent family, and yet most of the people I talk to about it say it isn't going to get better because of the global village we're in, and I think you mentioned that, by other countries finding that.

I sit on Armed Services, and it's a very interesting piece of the discussion. People are now talking about you can't cut jobs because there's no place for people to go where they can make that kind of money, and they made all their life plans around that kind of weekly wage.

And the earlier part about what you do with 18-year-olds that aren't ready for college, and where do they go if you're not taking them in. I mean, all of those things I think are very, very important in that.

So, I think your research is very interesting by targeting just on that piece of it, and the question that I'm hearing people ask is that now that more and more families have a spouse working some, or part-time, or full-time in the market, what happens next in the global market to try and prevent that? I mean, who else can go to work?

Dr. DUNCAN. Let me emphasize that half of what I have to say is good news. Meltdown implies all bad news, and I don't want to be too much of an optimist because the pessimistic side is pessimistic indeed.

But I think what's gone on simultaneously is the decline in real wages for relatively less skilled workers, but at the same time a tremendous reward, an increased premium, to a certain set of skills that college graduates possess and more technically skilled high school graduates possess.

So, I think we need to look to the labor market to see what skills are being rewarded, and they are being rewarded to a greater extent now than they were ten years ago, 15 years ago—that's the good news part of it—and try to cultivate those skills in our work force to the extent that we can.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, it is interesting because you hear economists now saying everything we do here should be looked at, whether it's encouraging consumption or encouraging investment, and I assume the investment part goes to the skill bank.

And I saw this weekend some economists said that part of the decline for some families in the middle class was that not enough males had college degrees, that a very significant part could be attributed to that. So, maybe we wear "Save the Male" shirts, I'm not sure, but I am troubled because I have looked at how many young people of our 2 million standing forces have signed up for the college programs, it's very high, a very high percentage. And if you take that opportunity away, it's one more way of getting those skills so that you can be there.

So, I think finding how we finance or make that investment in the skill basis is very troubling.

Ms. WEITZ. If I could just add one thing, I think the concern about single-parent families, there is an emerging literature there, too, on the role of wages and family formation. It's not the only factor, surely, there are all the cultural and value issues, too, but, again, that investment in education may pay off also, in family formation.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, if a male doesn't have a job to provide for his family, it's like you've taken his masculinity away, you know, and who is going to sit there and be reminded of it every day, and that's a very heavy one.

Mr. RECTOR. I just wanted to say that according to my understanding of the data, if you use the current population survey of the Census Bureau instead of the Panel study of Income Dynamics, that it in fact shows that to any degree that there's been an increase in inequality, it is due in part to the earnings distribution

question which you pointed out, and which I agree exists, which is important to recognize is largely exogenous to government.

Second, it's a factor of the differences between having two earners and having one earner in the family. If you look overall at households, you find that if you look at the top 20 percent of households, they have 164 full-time earners for every 100 households. If you look at the bottom 20 percent of households, they have 18 full-time earners per 100 households. In fact, if you look at the bottom 20 percent of households, what we see is that we have, in fact, created an almost completely pristine class of people that are dependent upon welfare or other types of government programs for their income, and there's virtually no earnings down there at all.

The third factor, if you're looking at Census Bureau data, is that the increase in single-parent families has decidedly been a significant factor in the increase in apparent inequality. And I would say that really there are three factors that everyone can agree on that have contributed to this increase in single-parenthood. One is, I would agree, the decline in wages for low skilled workers—that's a factor that liberals like the most. I agree that that is a factor; the second is what Mr. Blankenhorn was referring to, changes in basic values, that is a very important factor, but the third factor is, in fact, the welfare system.

The welfare system profoundly discourages marriage. It has turned low income males from being a necessary breadwinner for their families, into being a net financial penalty. In fact, welfare makes marriage economically irrational for most low income families in the United States today. They have to accept a net financial loss in order to get married, and that is a very bad thing.

And some of the proposals that we've heard here today, such as the Rockefeller proposal, actually would make that even worse by disproportionately rewarding single-parenthood in comparison to the benefits that they gave to marked working two-parent families.

Dr. DUNCAN. Could I respond to those comments, please, at least one of them?

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Sure, please.

Dr. DUNCAN. The data source that I used was indeed the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, but its trends—it's an actual representative sample, and its trends and demographic composition—mirror those of the Current Population Survey extremely closely.

So, the story that comes out—we've done a lot of checks with this—the story that comes out of our data is very similar to the story that comes out of the Current Population Survey.

Just two comments. One is that I think the substantial number of working poor families would strongly object to the characterization that there's no work going on in the bottom 20 percent of families, that simply isn't true.

The second thing concerns the role of the welfare system in affecting family composition decisions. There's a lot of research on this, it isn't all conclusive. I've done some of it myself. Regarding fertility decisions, evidence is virtually unanimous in pointing to a lack of a link between the generosity of welfare benefit levels and the decisions of women to have children. The evidence on divorce is somewhat ambiguous, but if anything, if there is an effect, the effect tends to be quite modest.

I think part of the problem is that you have to place side-by-side the benefits provided by welfare with the economic opportunities in marriage. Your "Save the Males" cry hits exactly to this point because what's happened is that these economic developments that I've talked about, the lower earnings for the less skilled workers, are making marriage economically less attractive.

And in studies that I've seen, one of which I did, which tried to put side-by-side the generosity of the welfare system and the alternatives, the marriage alternative that a teen girl would face were she not to have a child, what you find is that those economic opportunities are much stronger and highly significant in explaining whether or not she decides to have a child, than are the benefit levels.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. I think that's a lot of what the AAUW was trying to say about young women and education, that we haven't made very much progress as yet in really dealing with that.

I wanted to ask, too, the good news-bad news thing. When we break the society out into the three categories of the upper income, middle income, and lower income, and it does appear that low income is growing, is there a limit beyond which a society starts to bog down? Has anyone ever looked at that?

I have heard from people who are into demography saying, well, the good news is we think it will plateau out at 15–20 percent. The bad news is, we don't know any society that's sustained itself at that level. Has anyone done any research on that, that you know of, Dr. Duncan?

Dr. DUNCAN. To evaluate the maximum sustainable size of the low income group?

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Yes.

Dr. DUNCAN. No, I don't know that. If you compare the United States to European countries, the extent of earned income inequality is very similar to the United States. They've been affected by exactly the same global trends as the United States. But their system of supporting the family through various means leads to a much more equal distribution of family income in those countries than in the United States.

So, the United States is really alone among the developed western nations, in the extent to which it tolerates an extreme inequality in the family income distribution.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, it's interesting because the other charts that are now out about the families with children and the senior citizens and how the lines have shifted in poverty, I mean, that being seniors and that being families with children, and how they've cost, and the income transfer programs have cost a lot of that.

If you look at the Federal Government, there's absolutely no question seniors get a much higher percentage of the budget than families with children, whereas in Europe it's more across-the-board, but those are all things we have to ponder, I guess.

Yes, Mr. Rector?

Mr. RECTOR. I think it's important to note that one of the major factors that may influence comparisons of income distribution in the United States and other countries is that out of the $225 billion

in welfare spending in the United States, the Census Bureau manages to count only about $30 billion of that spending as income. In fact, the missing money is roughly three times what is needed to abolish all poverty in the United States.

Now, unless you have an identical factor of miscounting in all other nations that you're comparing income distribution with, which you don't have, I don't think that the numbers have any validity whatsoever, and the fact of the matter is that the average welfare benefits, for example, for the average mother with two children on welfare in the United States, in the average state, are, in fact, way over the poverty threshold. There's a tremendous amount of money down there.

In fact, let's even go to a simpler factor. The Census Bureau itself admits that there's $100 billion in income of self-employed persons that they miss, that the IRS knows about, but the Census Bureau doesn't pick it up. And then beyond that, you have gray market, you have this huge—the entire welfare system virtually is not counted in these income distribution factors that you're talking about. And unless you have exactly the same level of miscount in France or in Italy or somewhere else, then you're comparing one pile of sand to another pile of sand and it has absolutely no validity whatsoever.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, we absolutely have to go because we are about to go into session, and there's a thousand things happening.

I guess my problem is, first of all, I do want to state for the record we called the National Commission on Children, and they said it was absolutely unanimously approved, and the only dissent was on the health care thing, on which there was a written chapter. So, I do want to at least state that for the record.

And, secondly, I want to say that if we're going to get in here quibbling about this, then what we're really saying is that the polls are absolutely wrong, that people shouldn't be worrying at all, they should all be happy and tap dancing.

And I think the day after New Hampshire, we know that there must be some validity to the polls people, that people are concerned how far, if they are exactly on target, if we exactly know where we're going, we don't know for sure, but I would hope that we could start coming together and looking at that a little more, rather than just saying this is wrong or that is wrong, and getting into these issues.

Thank you so much for your patience and all of that and, with that, we adjourn the hearing. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 1:45 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

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March 11, 1992

Ms. Judith Weitz, KIDS COUNT Coordinator
The Center for the Study of Social Policy
1250 I Street, N.W., Suite 503
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Weitz:

I want to express my personal appreciation to you for appearing before the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families at our hearing, "America's Families: Conditions, Trends, Hopes and Fears," held here in Washington on February 19, 1992. Your testimony was important to the work of the Committee.

The Committee is now in the process of preparing the transcript for printing. It would be helpful if you would go over the enclosed copy of your remarks to assure that they are accurate, and return the transcript by Friday, March 20, with any necessary corrections. Please include any other information or documents requested during the hearing.

In addition, I would appreciate the following for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing:

> Please comment on the statement by Mr. David Blakenhorn that bias in the phrasing of the questions in the poll commissioned by KIDS COUNT predetermined the poll's findings.

Sincerely,

Pat Schroeder

PATRICIA SCHROEDER
Chairwoman
Select Committee on Children,
Youth and Families

Enclosure

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS
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March 10, 1992

Mr. Thomas J. Plewes, Associate Commissioner
Employment and Unemployment Statistics
Bureau of Labor Statistics
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20212

Dear Mr. Plewes:

I want to express my personal appreciation to you for appearing before the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families at our hearing, "America's Families: Conditions, Trends, Hopes and Fears," held here in Washington on February 19, 1992. Your testimony was important to the work of the Committee.

The Committee is now in the process of preparing the transcript for printing. It would be helpful if you would go over the enclosed copy of your remarks to assure that they are accurate, and return the transcript by Friday, March 20, with any necessary corrections. Please include any other information or documents requested during the hearing.

In addition, it would be useful if you would answer the following questions for the printed record.

1. What changes in the cost of major family non-housing expenditures, including food, clothing, transportation, education, health care and child care, took place between 1980 and 1990? How did these trends affect trends in family income and household debt?

2. Mr. Robert Rector of The Heritage Foundation suggested at the close of the hearing that income was miscalculated by the Census Bureau and others by failing to take into account federal medical and welfare assistance to families. He implied that if such assistance were taken into account, fewer families would actually be considered poor and family income comparisons with other countries were invalid as a

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result. He also stated that average welfare benefits for a mother with two children in the average state are way over the poverty threshold. Please comment on the validity of his remarks.

3. Your written testimony provided the Select Committee with data about families with children with an unemployed family member. Can you tell the Committee what percent of these families are low-income, middle-income or upper-income?

4. Do you have any data on changes in the percentage of workers in families with children (as a percentage of all families with children) who are working part-time or as temporary workers involuntarily, especially as a result of the recession?

5. What percentage of employers, broken out by size of employer (small, medium, large), provide paid or unpaid maternity leave?

Congressman Frank Wolf has asked that the following questions be directed to you to add to the record.

Please provide information about trends in the following area:

Total Separate Number of Work Hours for Mother and Father in Same Family Unit Throughout the Year

1. Provide data on the total combined hours in the labor force of married couples with children. Please provide data on how family work hours are divided between mother and father as a total family unit and how they are spread out throughout the year (ie. does mother work only through school year, etc.).

Full- and Part-Time Work

1. Among wives with pre-school children under 6, full-time, year-round labor force participation has increased or decreased by what percent in 1970 to what percent in 1990?

2. Among wives with school-age children age 6 to 17, full-time, year-round labor force participation increased or decreased from what percent in 1970 to what percent in 1990?

3. Among wives with pre-school children under 6 (and then age 6 to 17), part-time labor force participation has increased or decreased by what percent in 1970 to what percent in 1990?

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4. In 1990, of the 85 percent of married-couple families with related children where the husband worked year-round and full-time and the mother worked in some capacity--please provide percentages on the work arrangements of these mothers (full-time, part-time, full-time year round, etc).

5. Latest statistic on number and percent of mothers with children under 6 working full-time, year round.

Alternative Work Scheduling

1. Do you have information on the percentages of mothers with children who participate in alternative work arrangements such as part-time, work-from-home, job sharing, compressed work week, etc.? If so, do you have percentages for each of these alternative work areas? Do you have these percentages broken down by age of children (ie. for mothers with children under 6, for mothers with children age 6 to 17). If not, why not?

Sincerely,

Pat Schroeder

PATRICIA SCHROEDER
Chairwoman
Select Committee on Children,
Youth and Families

Enclosure

U.S. Department of Labor

Bureau of Labor Statistics
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20212

APR 3 1992

Response from Thomas J. Plewes to Questions Posed by Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder and Congressman Bob McEwen

Honorable Patricia Schroeder
Chairwoman, Select Committee on
Children, Youth, and Families
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-8401

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

This is in response to your recent letter to Associate Commissioner Thomas J. Plewes, in which you asked that we review the transcript of his remarks before the Select Committee at its recent Hearing and provide answers to some additional questions.

We have already transmitted our copy of the transcript with minor corrections in language noted. Our responses to the questions raised at the Hearing by Mr. Bob McEwen and yourself (pages 91 and 107 of the transcript) also have been forwarded to the Committee.

Following are the answers to the questions raised in your letter:

1. With regard to changing spending patterns, smaller percentages of the average expenditures of both two-parent and single-parent families went for food, clothing, and transportation in 1990 than in 1980. In contrast, the expenditures of both types of families for housing, health care, and child care rose over the same period. (See Enclosure A for detail.) We have not directly examined the relationships among debt, income, and changes in expenditure patterns for families.

2. As you know, there is considerable disagreement over what should or should not be classified as income in the determination of the official poverty level. Since the measurement of both household income and poverty is the responsibility of the Bureau of the Census, I believe it is inappropriate for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to comment on Mr. Robert Rector's statements regarding this subject.

3 and 4. We do not have information immediately available to answer these questions. However, the Current Population Survey (CPS) individual record files may contain some of this information. Extracting the relevant data from these tapes is a lengthy, expensive process, as it requires considerable computer programming work. Should the Committee decide that

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this information would be useful at a later date, the Bureau would be pleased to determine the precise timing and cost of the programming work. Please let me know of your decision.

5. We have no data at this time with regard to the number of employers who offer some sort of parental leave benefits. However, we have data for 1989 which show that short-term disability leave, which covers pregnancy, is available to 89 percent of full-time employees in medium and large private business establishments (those with 100 workers or more). Additionally, 37 percent of full-time employees in such establishments were eligible for unpaid maternity leave above and beyond short-term disability leave that is available to pregnant employees, while 18 percent were eligible for unpaid paternity leave. For small establishments, we have data for 1990 which show that 17 percent of full-time workers were eligible for unpaid maternity leave while 8 percent were eligible for unpaid paternity leave. A very small percentage of part-time workers in small establishments had either type of unpaid leave made available to them. Paid leave of these types was very rare. These data are shown in Enclosure B, BLS Reports On Its First Survey of Employee Benefits in Small Private Establishments.

Here are our replies to Congressman Frank Wolf's questions.

Total Separate Number of Work Hours for Mother and Father in Same Family Unit Throughout the Year

We have no data on the aggregate number of hours persons work per year.

Full- and Part-Time Work

1. Data from the March CPS show that the percentage of married mothers who worked year round, full time and had children under 6 approximately tripled between 1970 and 1990 (from 10 to 28 percent).

2. The proportion of those who were year-round, full-time workers and had school-age children almost doubled (from 23 percent to 40 percent) over the 2-decade period.

3. There were much smaller gains in the proportions of married mothers who usually worked part time (less than 35 hours a week) on their longest job during the year. In

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1970, 21 percent of the mothers with school-age children worked part time, compared with 25 percent in 1990. For married mothers with pre-schoolers, the proportions were 17 and 23 percent, respectively.

4. The work experience of married mothers varies some by that of their husbands. In 1990, 35 percent of the mothers whose husbands were year-round, full-time workers also worked all year at full-time jobs. An additional 25 percent worked only at part-time jobs, and about 26 percent did not work at all. Perhaps surprisingly, smaller proportions of mothers were year-round, full-time workers in families in which the husbands worked less than year round full time, or did not work at all. For instance, of the mothers whose husbands worked during the year but did not have a full-time job, about 32 percent were year-round, full-time workers. And, of those whose husbands did not work at all, 29 percent worked all year full time.

5. Overall, including non-married mothers, 27 percent of all mothers worked year round full time in 1990.

Alternative Work Schedules

We have no data on mothers and alternative work arrangements. The most recent data on alternative work arrangements in general were collected in May 1985, and thus are quite out of date. This information has not been collected more frequently because of the increased cost and respondent burden that would result from the additional questions needed to obtain these data.

I hope this information satisfactorily addresses all your questions as well as those of Congressman Wolf.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM G. BARRON, JR.
Deputy Commissioner

Enclosures

Enclosure A

Expenditures of families with husband, wife and children, and single parents with children, 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990	
	Total husband wife with children	One parent, with at least one child under 18	Total husband wife with children	One parent, with at least one child under 18
Number of Consumer units (000's)	27,276	4,273	27,991	6,074
Average number of children under 18	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.8
Total Expenditures				
Mean expenditure	$21,334	$11,719	$36,999	$18,469
Food, total				
Mean expenditure	$4,195	$2,631	$5,862	$3,747
Share of total expenditures	19.7%	22.5%	15.8%	20.3%
Child Care (baby sitting and daycare)				
Mean expenditure	$163	$207	$517	$432
Share of total expenditures	0.8%	1.8%	1.4%	2.3%
Apparel, total				
Mean expenditure	$1,138	$804	$1,906	$1,158
Share of total expenditures	5.3%	6.9%	5.2%	6.3%
Transportation, total				
Mean expenditure	$4,688	$1,997	$7,400	$2,666
Share of total expenditures	22.0%	17.0%	20.0%	14.5%
Health care, total				
Mean expenditure	$835	$345	$1,588	$583
Share of total expenditures	3.9%	2.9%	4.3%	3.2%
Education				
Mean expenditure	$316	$164	$630	$231
Share of total expenditures	1.5%	1.4%	1.7%	1.2%
Housing, (less child care)				
Mean expenditure	$5,655	$3,731	$10,416	$6,284
Share of total expenditures	26.5%	31.8%	28.2%	34.0%
All other expenses *				
Mean expenditure	$4,344	$1,839	$8,681	$3,347
Share of total expenditures	20.4%	15.7%	23.5%	18.1%

* Includes alcoholic beverages, tobacco, entertainment, personal care, reading, miscellaneous, cash contributions, and personal insurance and pensions

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditure Survey (Interview)

Enclosure B

News
United States Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics Washington, D.C. 20212

Technical data: (202) 523-9445
(202) 523-9241
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USDL 91-260

FOR RELEASE: Immediate
Monday, June 10, 1991

BLS REPORTS ON ITS FIRST SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS IN SMALL PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENTS

The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics today released findings of its first survey of employee benefits in small private-industry establishments. The 1990 survey covered establishments with fewer than 100 employees. These establishments had less extensive employee benefits coverage than the medium and large establishments (those with 100 workers or more) surveyed by the Bureau in 1989.

Slightly more than two-thirds of full-time employees in small private establishments were provided medical care benefits in 1990, compared with over nine-tenths of full-time employees in medium and large establishments in 1989. Among part-time workers in small establishments in 1990, less than one-tenth had medical care benefits. (The 1989 survey of medium and large establishments covered only full-time employees.)

The pattern of higher benefit coverage for employees in larger establishments and for full-time employees was found for other benefit categories as well, including paid leave, unpaid parental leave, and retirement plans, as shown below:

Percent of employees participating in benefit plans

Benefit	Small establishments, 1990			Medium and large establishments, 1989
	Total	Full time	Part time	Full time
Paid holidays	72	83	28	97
Paid vacations	76	88	29	97
Unpaid maternity leave	14	17	4	37
Unpaid paternity leave	6	8	2	18
Medical care	56	69	6	92
Life insurance	52	64	6	94
Retirement plan	36	42	10	81

* The 1989 survey covered only full-time employees.

Three-fourths of the full-time workers with medical care benefits were covered by a traditional fee-for-service plan. Under such plans, payments are made to the care provider or to the patient after care has been received. Another one-eighth of the full-time participants were covered by fee-for-service plans with a preferred provider option. Participants choosing the option received care at lower costs if treatment was provided by designated hospitals, physicians, or dentists. Health maintenance organizations, which provide a predetermined set of benefits for a fixed cost, typically from a predetermined group of providers, covered the remaining one-eighth of full-time plan participants.

About two-fifths of full-time employees with medical care benefits were required to contribute toward the cost of individual coverage; two-thirds contributed for family coverage. When employee contributions were required, they averaged about $25 per month for individual coverage and $110 per month for family coverage.

Life insurance protection, typically paid for entirely by employers, was provided to two-thirds of full-time workers in small establishments. About 3 out of 5 life insurance plan participants had benefits specified as flat amounts, averaging slightly more than $15,000. Most of the remaining participants were provided life insurance benefits based on salary, typically one or two times annual pay.

Additional life insurance protection could be obtained by about one-fourth of those employees covered by a basic life insurance plan. In nearly all cases, this supplemental coverage, while available at group insurance rates, was paid for entirely by the employee. One-fifth of life insurance participants were in plans that continued benefits after retirement. In nearly all cases, these benefits were reduced at retirement, but remained in effect for life.

Sickness and accident insurance plans, which provide either a percentage of a worker's pay or a flat amount per week during a period of disability, were available to one-fourth of full-time workers in the 1990 small establishment survey. A typical sickness and accident insurance plan imposes a 7 day waiting period before benefits (often half or two-thirds of regular pay) begin, with payments continuing for 26 weeks.

When an employee is disabled for a longer period of time, or indefinitely, income replacement benefits may be available through a long-term disability insurance plan. About one-fifth of full-time employees in the 1990 small establishment survey participated in a long-term disability insurance plan; three out of four of these workers had coverage fully paid by their employer. Typical long-term disability insurance plans provided payments equal to 60 percent of pre-disability pay.

Retirement and capital accumulation plans. Defined benefit pension plans, which specify a formula for determining an employee's annuity, covered one-fifth of full-time workers in small establishments in 1990 -- approximately 6.5 million workers. Defined contribution plans, which usually specify the employer's contribution but do not indicate the actual amount of employee benefit, were available to three-tenths of full-time workers (approximately 10 million workers).

Defined benefit pension plans are designed to provide retirement income, that is, benefits are typically not available until an individual reaches a retirement age established by his or her plan. In contrast, defined contribution plans may be classified as retirement plans -- with restrictions on the access to benefits before a specified retirement age -- or as capital accumulation plans -- with easier access to benefits.

In 1990, a large majority of participants with defined contribution plans had limited access to funds prior to retirement age. About two-fifths of full-time employees in small establishments were covered by some type of retirement plan, either a defined benefit plan, a defined contribution plan that restricted access to benefits, or both.

The sample of establishments from which EBS and ECI data are collected is updated periodically over a 4-year cycle. Each year, new sample establishments in selected industries are introduced into the survey, while older sample establishments are removed from the survey. Benchmark adjustments were applied to the data to estimate current employment in each industry. More details on sampling and estimation procedures will appear in the Technical Note to Employee Benefits in Small Establishments, 1990, which will be published later this year.

Completion of the Employee Benefits Survey in small establishments represents the last major step in a planned expansion of BLS employee benefits data, which already are available for full-time employees in medium and large private establishments (those employing 100 workers or more) and in State and local governments. Summary data from the Bureau's medium and large private establishment survey are presented in table 3. These data are from the Bureau's 1989 Employee Benefits Survey; however, since the overall incidence of benefits is fairly stable from year to year, especially in larger establishments, these data may be used for comparison with the 1990 data on small establishments.

Benefits data for small establishments are available for all covered employees combined and separately for three broad occupational groups: Professional, technical, and related employees; clerical and sales employees; and production and service employees. Definitions of these occupational groups may be found in the tables at the end of this release. Data are also available for full-time and part-time employees. Workers were classified as either full-time or part-time in accordance with practices of surveyed establishments.

Availability of Survey Results

Detailed tabulations of the benefit provisions, in addition to estimates of sample error on all data, are currently being developed. Upon completion of a thorough analysis of these data later this year, the results will be published in a BLS bulletin, Employee Benefits in Small Establishments, 1990. The Bureau also collected employee benefits data for employees in State and local governments in 1990. These data will also be available later this year. Data are currently being collected for the 1991 survey of medium and large private establishments; these results will be issued in 1992.

Benefits data for full-time employees in medium and large private establishments (those employing 100 workers or more) are currently available in Employee Benefits in Medium and Large Firms, 1989 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin 2363, June 1990).

Table 2. Part-time[1] employees participating in selected employee benefit programs, small private establishments, United States, 1990[2]
(In percent)

Employee benefit program	All part-time employees	Professional, technical, and related employees[3]	Clerical and sales employees[4]	Production and service employees[5]
Paid time off				
Holidays	28	35	37	19
Vacations	29	28	34	26
Personal leave	4	13	4	2
Lunch period	5	(6)	6	6
Rest period	27	5	34	25
Funeral leave	11	17	17	5
Jury duty leave	13	7	17	10
Military leave	3	1	5	3
Sick leave	11	36	12	6
Maternity leave	1	(6)	1	(6)
Paternity leave	-	-	-	-
Unpaid time off				
Maternity leave	4	1	5	4
Paternity leave	2	1	4	1
Insurance				
Sickness and accident insurance	10	27	9	8
Long-term disability insurance	(6)	2	1	(6)
Medical care	6	6	7	6
Dental care	3	1	3	3
Life insurance	6	5	8	6
Retirement				
All retirement[7]	10	7	15	7
Defined benefit pension	4	1	5	4
Defined contribution	7	6	12	4
Retirement[8]	7	6	11	4
Capital accumulation[9]	1	(6)	1	(6)
Other benefits				
Flexible benefits plans	1	-	1	1
Reimbursement accounts	1	(6)	1	1

1 Employees are classified as part-time in accordance with practices of surveyed establishments.
2 Except for maternity and paternity leave and reimbursement accounts, benefits paid for entirely by the employee were excluded from the tabulations.
3 Includes professional, technical, executive, and administrative occupations.
4 Includes clerical, administrative support, and sales occupations.
5 Includes production, craft, repair, laborer, and service occupations.
6 Less than 0.5 percent.
7 Includes defined benefit pension plans and defined contribution retirement plans. Some employees participated in both types of plans.
8 Includes money purchase pension, profit sharing, savings and thrift, stock bonus, employee stock ownership, and Simplified Employee Pension plans in which employer contributions must remain in the participant's account until retirement age, death, disability, separation from service, age 59-1/2, or hardship.
9 Includes plans in which participants may withdraw employer contributions from their accounts without regard to the conditions listed in footnote 8.

NOTE: Dash indicates no employees in this category.

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U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary for
Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20210

March 5, 1992

The Honorable Patricia Schroeder
Chairwoman, Select Committee on
Children, Youth and Families
385 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6401

Dear Chairwoman Schroeder:

Enclosed please find materials responsive to questions asked of Bureau of Labor Statistics Associate Commissioner Tom Plewes at the Select Committee's February 19, 1992, hearing on "America's Families: Conditions, Trends, Hopes and Fears." I hope you find this information helpful.

As requested, Table A provides the number of children according to the full- or part-time employment status of their parents. Table B provides the same distribution for families. The Monthly Labor Review article compares the United States to other nations in terms of family composition and related topics.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Frances C. McNaught

Enclosure

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Table A. Children under 18 in primary families by full- or part-time[1] employment status of parents, March 1991

Characteristic	Numbers (in thousands)	Percent
Children under 18, total	59,507	100.0
In two parent families	45,875	77.1
One or both parents employed full time	41,509	69.8
One parent employed full time	25,355	42.6
Father	22,920	38.5
Mother	2,435	4.1
Both parents employed full time	16,154	27.1
One or both parents employed part time, neither full time	1,501	2.5
Neither parent employed	2,864	4.8
In Single parent families[2]	13,633	22.9
Parent employed full time	6,698	11.3
Parent employed part time	1,225	2.1
Parent not employed	5,709	9.6

[1] Full-time workers are those who usually work 35 hours a week or more. Part-time workers are those who usually work less than 35 hours a week.

[2] Includes families maintained by a never-married, widowed, divorced or separated parent.

NOTE:Children refer to own, never-married children of the householder and include sons, daughters, step and adopted children. Not included are nieces, nephews, grandchildren, other related children, and unrelated children. Families include primary families only.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table B. Primary families with children under 18 by full- or part-time[1] employment status of parents, March 1991

Characteristic	Numbers (in thousands)	Percent
Families with children under 18, total	32,395	100.0
In two parent families	24,393	75.3
One or both parents employed full time	22,270	68.7
One parent employed full time	12,761	39.4
Father	11,425	35.3
Mother	1,336	4.1
Both parents employed full time	9,510	29.4
One or both parents employed part time, neither full time	776	2.4
Neither parent employed	1,347	4.2
Single parent families[2]	8,001	24.7
Parent employed full time	4,354	13.4
Parent employed part time	737	2.3
Parent not employed	2,911	9.0

[1] Full-time workers are those who usually work 35 hours a week or more. Part-time workers are those who usually work less than 35 hours a week.

[2] Includes families maintained by a never-married, widowed, divorced or separated parent.

NOTE: Children refer to own, never-married children of the householder and include sons, daughters, step and adopted children. Not included are nieces, nephews, grandchildren, other related children, and unrelated children. Families include primary families only.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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The changing family in international perspective

Families are becoming smaller and less traditional as fertility rates fall and more persons live alone; Scandinavian countries are the pacesetters in developing nontraditional forms of family living, but the United States has the highest incidence of divorce and of single-parent households

Constance Sorrentino

Far-reaching changes are occurring in family structures and household living arrangements in the developed countries. The pace and timing of change differ from country to country, but the general direction is the same practically everywhere. Families are becoming smaller, and household composition patterns over the past several decades have been away from the traditional nuclear family—husband, wife, and children living in one household—and toward more single-parent households, more persons living alone, and more couples living together out of wedlock. Indeed, the "consensual union" has become a more visible and accepted family type in several countries. The one-person household has become the fastest growing household type.

In conjunction with the changes in living arrangements, family labor force patterns have also undergone profound changes. Most countries studied have experienced a rapid rise in participation rates of married women, particularly women who formerly would have stayed at home with their young children.

Scandinavian countries have been the pacesetters in the development of many of the nontraditional forms of family living, especially births outside of wedlock and cohabitation outside of legal marriage. Women in these societies also have the highest rates of labor force participation. However, in at least two aspects, the United States is setting the pace: Americans have, by far, the highest divorce rate of any industrial nation, as well as a higher incidence of single-parent households, one of the most economically vulnerable segments of the population. Japan is the most traditional society of those studied, with very low rates of divorce and births out of wedlock and the highest proportion of married-couple households. In fact, Japan is the only country studied in which the share of such households has increased since 1960. But even in Japan, family patterns are changing: sharp drops in fertility have led to much smaller families, and the three-generation household, once the mainstay of Japanese family life, is in decline.

As part of the *Monthly Labor Review*'s 75th-anniversary examination of the family, this article develops an international perspective on the changes in the American family by looking at selected demographic, household, and labor force trends in the past 25 to 30 years in Canada, Japan, and the major Western European nations. The 25- to 30-year time frame was chosen as the longest span for which data were available for all the countries examined. Because definitions and concepts differ among countries, an appendix dealing with these is included at the end of the article.

Constance Sorrentino is an economist in the Division of Foreign Labor Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Demographic background

Major demographic and sociological changes directly influencing family composition have taken place in this century, with the pace of change accelerating in the past two decades. Almost all developed countries have seen changes of four principal types: A decline in fertility rates, the aging of the population, an erosion of the institution of marriage, and a rapid increase in childbirths out of wedlock. Each of these four trends has played a part in the transformation of the modern family.

Fertility rates. Over the past century, women in industrialized countries have moved to having fewer children—that is, to lower fertility rates. The decline was, in many cases, interrupted by the post-World War II baby boom, but it resumed in the 1960's. Japan is an exception, in that fertility rates have declined sharply and almost continuously since the late 1940's, with no postwar upturn apart from a small recovery and stabilization from the mid-1960's to the early 1970's.

The change in total fertility rates in 10 countries is shown in table 1. With the exception of some baby "boomlets" in the late 1970's and 1980's, total fertility rates in most developed countries have declined to below the level needed to replace population deaths, namely, 2.1 children per woman. This means that the current population will not even replace itself if current levels of fertility continue. By 1988, fertility rates in the developed countries fell into a narrow range of from 1.3 to 1.4 children per woman in Germany and Italy to around 1.9 to 2.0 in the United States and Sweden.

Decreased fertility has important implications for the family. In particular, family size is getting smaller, with consequences for parents—especially mothers—and children. Probably the most significant effect of falling fertility is the opportunity it has afforded women for increased participation in the labor market. And the converse relation holds as well: increased participation leads to lower fertility. Smaller families also mean fewer relatives to care for young children.

Aging of the population. It is important to consider the age structure of the population because different arrays of persons by age result in different household structures across countries. Mortality, as well as fertility, has declined in the 20th century. The decline in mortality has been more or less continuous, and the average age at death has risen considerably in all developed countries. The decrease in fertility has resulted in a decline in the proportion of children in the population. However, because it affected all age groups, the drop in mortality did not have a major effect on the age structure of populations. In fact, mortality decreased more at younger than at older ages, thereby offsetting rather than exacerbating the effect of the fertility decline. Thus, the progressive aging of the population in the developed countries is attributable primarily to the declining fertility rates.[1]

Table 2 shows the distribution of the population by age in 10 countries from 1950 to 1990. The proportion of the population in the youngest age group (0-14 years) is declining everywhere, while the proportion of the elderly (age 65 and over) is increasing. Compared with most European countries and Japan, the U.S. and Canadian populations are more youthful, reflecting higher comparative fertility rates. However, in both North American countries, the declining fertility rates have produced a sharp drop since 1960 in the share of the population held by the under-age-15 group. With the exception of France, all the European countries and Japan now have less than one-fifth of their total population under 15, with Germany having the lowest proportion.

At the other end of the spectrum, European countries tend to have larger proportions of elderly persons than do the two North American nations. Sweden, Germany, and Denmark all have about the same proportion of elderly as they have children under 15. In contrast, the

Table 1. **Total fertility rates[1] in 10 countries, selected years, 1921–88**

Country	1921	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1986	1988
United States	3.3	2.3	3.2	3.6	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.9
Canada	4.0	2.8	3.5	3.8	2.2	1.7	1.7	1.7
Japan	5.3	4.5	3.2	1.9	2.1	1.7	1.7	1.8
Denmark	3.1	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.0	1.4	1.5	1.6
France	2.6	1.8	2.8	2.8	2.5	2.0	1.8	1.8
Germany	(2)	(2)	2.1	2.5	1.9	1.4	1.4	1.4
Italy	(2)	2.7	2.3	2.4	2.4	1.6	1.3	1.3
Netherlands	3.5	2.8	3.0	3.2	2.4	1.6	1.6	1.5
Sweden	2.7	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.0	1.6	1.6	2.0
United Kingdom	2.7	1.7	2.1	2.8	2.4	1.8	1.8	1.8

[1] The total fertility rate is defined as the average number of children that would be born per woman if all women lived to the end of their childbearing years, and at each year of age they experienced the birth rates occurring in the specified year.

[2] Not available.

[3] 1921–25.

Source: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Employment Outlook* (Paris, OECD, September 1988), p. 204; Statistical Office of the European Communities, *Rapid Reports, Population and Social Conditions*, no. 1, 1988, p. 4; Statistics Sweden, *Befolkningsförändringar 1988* (*Del 1, Förseamlinger, Kommuner och Arsgrupper* [Population Changes, 1988, Part 1, Parishes, Communes, and Regions], p. 9; and unpublished estimates (1988 for the United States, Canada, and Japan) by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Center for International Research.

proportion of children in the United States and Canada is nearly twice as great as the proportion of elderly.

Life expectancy at birth is higher for women than for men in all the countries studied. Women outlive men by 6 to 7 years, on average, and this influences household structures, as many more women than men live alone at older ages. In most developed countries, women must anticipate a period of living alone at some point during their later years.

Aging of the population is common to all the industrialized countries, although there are considerable differences in the extent and timing of the phenomenon. These differences are reflected in the comparisons presented later on household type. For example, countries with high proportions of elderly people tend to have higher proportions of single-person households, because the elderly are increasingly living alone.

Marriage and divorce. Almost everyone in the United States gets married at some time in his or her life. The United States has long had one of the highest marriage rates in the world, and even in recent years it has maintained a relatively high rate. For the cohort born in 1945, for example, 95 percent of the men have married, compared with 75 percent in Sweden.[2] The other countries studied ranked somewhere between these two extremes.

According to table 3, a trend toward fewer marriages is plain in all of the countries studied, although the timing of this decline differs from country to country. In Scandinavia and Germany, for example, the downward trend in the marriage rate was already evident in the 1960's; in the United States, Canada, Japan, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, the decline began in the 1970's.

In Europe, the average age at marriage fell until the beginning of the 1970's, when a complete reversal occurred. Postponement of marriage by the young is now common throughout the continent. The generation born in the early 1950's initiated this new behavior, characterized by both later and less frequent marriage.[3] Average age at first marriage has also been rising in the United States since the mid-1950's, but Americans still tend to marry earlier than their European counterparts. For example, the average age at first marriage for American men and women in 1988 was 25.9 and 23.6, respectively. In Denmark, it was 29.2 for men and 26.5 for women.

The high U.S. marriage rate is, in part, related to the fact that the United States has maintained a fairly low level of nonmarital cohabitation. In Europe—particularly in Scandinavia, but also in France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands—there have been large increases in the incidence of unmarried couples living together. This situation is reflected in the lower marriage rates of these countries. Swedish data that include all cohabiting couples indicate that family formation rates have remained stable since 1960, even though marriage rates have dropped.

Divorce rates have shown a long-term increase in most industrial nations since around the turn of the century. After accelerating during the 1970's, the rates reached in the 1980's are probably the highest in the modern history of these nations. While a very large proportion of Americans marry, their marital breakup rate is

Table 2. **Distribution of population by age, 10 countries, 1950–90**

[In percent]

Country and age range	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990[1]
United States:					
Birth to 14 years	26.9	31.1	28.3	22.5	21.8
15 to 64 years	64.9	59.7	61.9	66.2	66.0
65 years and over	8.1	9.2	9.8	11.3	12.2
Canada:					
Birth to 14 years	29.7	33.6	30.3	23.0	20.8
15 to 64 years	62.6	58.0	61.7	67.5	67.9
65 years and over	7.6	7.5	8.0	9.5	11.4
Japan:					
Birth to 14 years	35.3	30.2	23.9	23.6	18.3
15 to 64 years	59.5	64.1	69.0	67.4	70.3
65 years and over	5.2	5.7	7.1	9.0	11.4
Denmark:					
Birth to 14 years	26.3	25.2	23.3	20.9	18.8
15 to 64 years	64.5	64.2	64.4	64.7	67.9
65 years and over	9.1	10.6	12.3	14.4	15.3
France:					
Birth to 14 years	22.7	26.4	24.8	22.4	20.3
15 to 64 years	65.9	62.0	62.3	63.7	65.9
65 years and over	11.3	11.6	12.9	13.9	13.8
Germany:					
Birth to 14 years	23.5	21.3	23.2	18.2	15.1
15 to 64 years	67.1	67.8	63.6	68.3	69.4
65 years and over	9.3	10.8	13.2	15.5	15.5
Italy:					
Birth to 13 years	26.4	23.4	22.9	20.5	17.8
14 to 64 years	65.5	67.6	66.5	66.7	68.4
65 years and over	8.0	9.0	10.5	12.9	13.8
Netherlands:					
Birth to 14 years	29.3	30.0	27.3	22.3	18.1
15 to 64 years	62.9	61.0	62.6	66.2	69.2
65 years and over	7.7	9.0	10.2	11.5	12.7
Sweden:					
Birth to 14 years	23.4	22.4	20.9	18.6	17.2
15 to 64 years	66.3	65.9	65.5	64.1	65.0
65 years and over	10.2	11.8	13.7	16.3	17.7
United Kingdom:					
Birth to 14 years	22.3	23.4	24.1	21.0	19.1
15 to 64 years	66.9	66.4	62.9	64.1	65.8
65 years and over	10.7	11.7	13.0	14.9	15.1

[1] Projected.

SOURCE: *Aging Populations: The Social Policy Implications* (Paris, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1988) pp. 80–81 and *Labour Force Statistics, 1960–71* and 1967–87 editions (Paris, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1973, 1989).

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by far the highest among the developed countries. (See table 3.) Based on recent divorce rates, the chances of a first American marriage ending in divorce are today about one in two; the corresponding ratio in Europe is about one in three to one in four.

Liberalization of divorce laws came to the United States well before it occurred in Europe, but such laws were loosened in most European countries beginning in the 1970's, with further liberalization taking place in the 1980's. Consequently, divorce rates are rising rapidly in many European countries. By 1986, the rate had quadrupled in the Netherlands and almost tripled in France over the levels recorded in 1960. The sharpest increase occurred in the United Kingdom, where the marital breakup rate increased sixfold. Although divorce rates continued to rise in Europe in the 1980's, the increase in the United States abated, and the rate in 1986 was slightly below that recorded in 1980. In Canada, although divorce rates remain considerably lower than in the United States, the magnitude of the increase since 1960 has been greater than that in the United Kingdom.

Table 3. Marriage and divorce rates in 10 countries, selected years, 1960–85

Country	1960	1970	1980	1985
	Marriage rates (per 1,000 population, ages 15 to 64)			
United States	14.1	17.0	15.9	15.1
Canada	12.6	14.3	11.8	10.2
Japan	14.5	14.4	9.8	8.6
Denmark	12.2	11.5	7.9	9.0
France	11.3	12.4	9.7	7.3
Germany	13.9	11.6	8.9	8.7
Italy	11.7	11.3	8.7	7.5
Netherlands	12.7	15.2	9.6	8.7
Sweden	10.2	9.2	7.1	7.2
United Kingdom	11.5	13.5	11.6	10.6
	Divorce rates (per 1,000 married women)			
United States	9.2	14.9	22.6	22.2
Canada	1.6	6.3	10.9	12.9
Japan	3.6	3.9	4.8	5.4
Denmark	5.9	7.6	11.2	12.6
France	2.9	3.3	6.3	8.5
Germany	3.6	5.1	8.1	8.3
Italy	.01	1.3	.9	1.1
Netherlands	2.2	3.3	7.5	8.7
Sweden	5.0	8.8	11.4	11.7
United Kingdom	2.0	4.7	12.0	12.9

[1] Beginning in 1980, includes unlicensed marriages registered in California.

[2] Not available.

Sources: Statistical Office of the European Communities, *Demographic Statistics, 1988*, and various national sources.

Italy is the only European country studied in which the divorce rate remains low, and divorce laws have not been liberalized there. Japan's divorce rates are lower than in all other countries except Italy, but, unlike Italy, there has been an upward trend in Japan since 1960.

Divorce rates understate the extent of family breakup in all countries; marital separations are not covered by the divorce statistics, and these statistics also do not capture the breakup of families in which the couple is not legally married. Studies show that in Sweden, the breakup rate of couples in consensual unions is three times the dissolution rate of married couples.[4] Statistics Sweden tabulates data on family dissolution from population registers that show when couples previously living together have moved to separate addresses. The data indicate that the family dissolution rate rose more than fourfold between 1960 and 1980, while the divorce rate merely doubled.

Births out of wedlock. Rates of births to unmarried women have increased in all developed countries except Japan. (See table 4.) The phenomenon arises from the decline of marriage, the increase in divorce, and the rising rates of cohabitation. Close to half of all live births in Sweden are now outside of wedlock, up from only 1 in 10 in 1960. Denmark is not far behind. In the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, unmarried women account for more than 1 out of 5 births, while the rates are far lower in the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany.

Although relatively high proportions of Swedish and Danish children are born out of wedlock, it should be noted that nearly all of them are born to parents who live together in a consensual union. These cohabiting parents are typically in a relationship that has many of the legal rights and obligations of a marriage. Statistics Sweden estimates that only 0.5 percent of all live births in the early 1980's involved a situation in which no father was identified and required to pay child support.

A relatively high proportion of births out of wedlock in the United States and the United Kingdom are to teenagers—more than 33 and 29 percent, respectively. In Sweden, teenagers account for only 6 percent, and in France and Japan about 10 percent. More than half of the births out of wedlock in Sweden are to women between the ages of 25 and 34, while only one-quarter are to women in that age group in the United States and the United Kingdom.[5]

All of the foregoing demographic trends have had an impact on household size and composition in the developed nations. This impact can be seen clearly in developments since 1960.

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Household size declines

One of the major ramifications of the demographic trends, especially the declining fertility rates and the aging of the population, is that households have diminished in size throughout this century. All of the countries studied have seen declines from an average of four or five members per household in the 1920's to an average of only two or three persons living together in the mid- to late 1980's. (See table 5.) Denmark, Germany, and Sweden currently have average household sizes in the range of 2.2 to 2.3 persons. The United States, Canada, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom have households in the 2.6- to 2.8-person range. Japan maintains the highest average, at about three persons per household. This is explained, in part, by the prevalence of three-generation households there.

Married couples living with both their children and parents made up 12 percent of all households in Japan in 1985. However, such households have lost considerable ground since 1960, when they represented one-quarter of all households in Japan. Meanwhile, three-generation households have virtually disappeared in Europe and North America. For example, the traditional German "stem" family comprising more than two generations represented 6 percent of all households in 1961, but only 2 percent by 1981. The share of the population residing in such households fell from 11 percent to less than 4 percent.[6]

Household composition

Households come in many sizes and types. Table 6 sets forth a proportional distribution by major household type for the period 1960 to 1988. Despite definitional differences that do not allow for full comparability across countries, broad distinctions and trends are reliable. Deviations that should be kept in mind involve the concepts of a married couple and a child. The classification "married couple" increasingly includes couples living together who are not legally married. The definition of the age limit for a child varies considerably from country to country, ranging from under the age of 16 in Sweden and under 18 in the United States and several other countries to any age in Germany and the Netherlands. Finally, the data for Denmark are derived differently than those for the other countries. For further information on all of these points, see the appendix.

Table 6 indicates that all countries shown, except Japan, are moving in the same direction in terms of household composition, although some are moving much faster than others. Married-couple households are declining in share in all but Japan; however, this category disguises the different changes occurring in the households with children, as opposed to those without children. Married-couple households without children are holding steady or increasing, while households comprising married couples with children are declining everywhere. Single-parent and one-person households are both on the rise.

All of the trends shown are partly reflections of the demographic patterns previously discussed. The erosion of marriage and the increase in divorce rates have brought about the decrease in the proportion of married-couple households. The decline would have been even greater in some countries if cohabiting couples had been excluded from the more recent statistics. Diminishing fertility rates and aging of the population, as well as postponement of parenthood among those who intend to have children, are behind the decline in the percentage of married couples with children. Divorce rates combine with the sharp rise in births out of wedlock to propel the increase in single-parent households. Postponement of marriage, increases in the incidence of divorce, and the aging of the population all have played a part in the increase in the proportion of one-person households. The next sections examine these trends in further detail.

Table 4. **Births to unmarried women as a percent of all live births, 10 countries, selected years, 1960–86**

Country	1960	1970	1980	1986	Percent change, 1960–86	
					All live births	Births to unmarried women
United States	5.3	10.7	18.4	23.4	+12	282
Canada	4.3	9.6	11.3	16.9	+22	209
Japan	1.2	0.9	0.8	1.0	−14	−26
Denmark	7.6	11.0	33.2	43.9	+27	308
France	6.1	6.8	11.4	21.9	−5	243
Germany	6.3	5.5	7.6	9.6	−56	2
Italy	2.4	2.2	4.3	5.6	−39	41
Netherlands	1.3	2.1	4.1	8.8	23	400
Sweden	11.3	18.4	38.7	48.4	0	328
United Kingdom	5.2	8.0	11.5	21.0	−18	231

SOURCES: Statistical Office of the European Communities, *Demographic Statistics, 1988*, and various national sources.

Married couples decline

Reflecting a significant change in family patterns, the term "married couple" now encom-

Table 6. **Percent distribution of households by type, nine countries, selected years, 1960–88**

Country and year	Married-couple households[1]			Single-parent households[2]	One-person households	Other households[3]
	Total	With children[2]	Without children[2]			
United States:						
1960	74.3	44.2	30.1	4.4	13.1	8.2
1970	70.5	40.3	30.3	5.0	17.1	7.4
1980	60.8	30.9	29.8	7.5	22.7	9.0
1987	57.8	27.5	30.0	8.1	23.6	10.7
1988	56.9	27.0	29.9	8.0	24.0	11.1
Canada:						
1961	*79.0	*50.8	*28.7	*3.8	9.3	*8.9
1971	74.0	46.5	27.5	4.5	13.4	8.1
1981	66.8	36.3	30.5	5.3	20.3	7.6
1986	64.8	32.3	32.2	5.8	21.5	8.4
Japan:						
1960	85.3	69.4	15.9	3.1	17.2	14.4
1970	84.3	64.6	19.7	2.3	20.3	13.1
1980	68.4	42.9	25.6	2.2	19.8	9.6
1985	67.4	39.2	28.2	2.5	20.8	9.3
Denmark:[4]						
1976	44.5	23.5	21.0	4.9	**	**
1983	43.7	22.6	21.1	5.4	**	**
1988	41.0	19.9	21.1	5.1	**	**
France:						
1968	70.1	43.6	26.5	4.2	20.3	5.4
1975	68.8	42.1	26.8	4.1	22.1	5.0
1982	67.0	39.7	27.2	4.3	24.6	4.1
1988	63.4	36.2	27.3	5.1	27.1	4.4
Germany:						
1961	68.7	44.3	22.4	10.8	20.6	1.9
1970	64.8	41.7	23.1	6.2	26.5	2.5
1980	60.5	37.0	23.5	6.6	30.2	2.7
1988	54.3	31.4	22.9	6.7	34.9	4.1
Netherlands:						
1961	77.6	55.4	22.3	5.7	11.9	4.8
1971	74.1	51.8	22.3	5.1	17.1	3.7
1981	66.5	43.7	22.9	6.1	21.4	6.0
1985	60.0	38.5	21.5	6.7	27.8	5.5
Sweden:						
1960	66.4	35.7	30.6	3.5	20.2	9.9
1970	64.3	30.2	34.1	3.2	25.3	7.2
1980	57.9	24.8	33.1	3.1	32.8	6.2
1985	54.8	21.7	33.1	3.2	36.1	5.9
United Kingdom:[7]						
1961	73.7	37.8	35.0	2.3	11.9	12.1
1971	69.7	34.4	35.2	2.8	18.1	9.4
1981	64.3	30.5	33.7	4.7	21.8	9.2
1987	64.0	29.0	35.0	4.0	25.0	7.0

[1] May include unmarried cohabiting couples. Such couples are explicitly included under married couples in Canada (beginning in 1981) and France. For Sweden, beginning in 1980, all cohabitants are included as married couples, and the figures for 1970 have been adjusted by Thora Nilsson (see source note below) to include all cohabitants. The 1960 data have not been adjusted, but the number of unmarried cohabitants was insignificant in 1960, according to Nilsson. For Denmark, from 1983 onward, persons reported repeatedly as living in consensual unions with joint children have been classified here as married couples. There was no separate reporting of such persons in 1976. In other countries, some unmarried cohabitants are included as married couples, while some are classified under "other households," depending on responses to surveys and censuses.

[2] Children are defined as unmarried children living at home according to the following age limits: Under 18 years old in the United States, Canada, Japan, Denmark, and the United Kingdom, except that the United Kingdom includes 18- and 17-year-olds only if they are in full-time education; under 25 years old in France; under 16 years old in Sweden; and children of all ages in Germany and the Netherlands.

[3] Includes both family and nonfamily households not elsewhere classified. These households comprise, for example, siblings residing together, other households composed of relatives, and households made up of roommates. Some unmarried cohabiting couples may also be included in the "other" group. (See footnote 1.)

[4] Estimated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, based on ratios of adjusted to unadjusted series in 1971. See source note on Canada.

[5] From family-based statistics. However, one person living alone constitutes a family in Denmark. In this respect, the Danish data are closer to household statistics.

[6] Not available.

[7] Great Britain only (excludes Northern Ireland).

SOURCES: Compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics from national population censuses, household surveys, and other sources. For the United States, data are from the March Current Population Survey; for Denmark, data are from the Central Population Register; for Canada, Japan, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, data are from population censuses, with the following exceptions: French data for 1968 and British data for 1987 are from household surveys, German data for 1970, 1980, and 1988 are from the Microcensus, Dutch data for 1981 and 1985 are from Housing Demand Surveys. Data for Sweden for 1960, 1970, and 1980 are adjusted for historical comparability by Thora Nilsson of Statistics Sweden in the article "Les ménages en Suède, 1960–1980" [Households in Sweden, 1960–1980] *Population*, no. 2, Mar.–Apr. 1985, pp. 223–48. Data for Canada (1971, 1981, and 1986) have been adjusted to U.S. concepts by Statistics Canada.

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passes an increasing number of unmarried cohabiting couples, particularly in Europe, but also in Canada. Although "married-couple" households remain the predominant household type in all countries, the term has a different meaning today than it did in 1960, when it was more likely to refer only to legally married persons. Nowadays, even though cohabitants are increasingly included as married couples, this type of household has lost considerable ground since 1960 in all countries except Japan. The decline is entirely in households with children.

Couples with children, the traditional nuclear family, accounted for half or more of all households in Canada and the Netherlands at the beginning of the 1960's. In Japan, too, such households were virtually half of all households, while their share was somewhat lower in the United States (44 percent), Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and probably France.

By the mid- to late 1980's, households comprising couples with children had fallen to under 30 percent of all households in the United States, Denmark, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Canada's and Germany's proportions were slightly more than 30 percent, while France's was 36 percent. Couples with children were most prevalent in Japan and the Netherlands, where they constituted almost 4 out of every 10 households. However, it should be noted that the data for Germany and the Netherlands are overstated in relation to the other countries because such data encompass children of all ages. Furthermore, the data for Japan and the Netherlands are for 1985, lagging 2 or 3 years behind the figures for several of the other countries. Because the trend is downward, 1988 data could show Japan and the Netherlands at around the level for France.

Table 5. **Average number of members per household, 10 countries, selected years, 1960–88**

Country	1988	1979	1977	1960–68[1]
United States	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.8
Canada	3.0	3.5	[2]2.9	2.8
Japan	4.1	3.4	[3]3.3	3.1
Denmark	2.9	2.7	[4]	2.3
France	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.6
Germany	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.3
Italy	3.6	3.4	3.1	2.8
Netherlands	3.6	3.2	2.9	2.5
Sweden	2.9	2.6	[2]2.4	2.2
United Kingdom[5]	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.6

[1] 1968 for the United States, Denmark, and France; 1967 for Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands; 1966 for Canada and the United Kingdom; 1965 for Japan and Sweden.

[2] 1981.

[3] 1975.

[4] Not available.

[5] Great Britain only (excludes Northern Ireland).

SOURCES: Statistical Office of the European Communities, *Economic and Social Features of Households in the Member States of the European Community* (Luxembourg, EUROSTAT, 1982); and various national sources.

The share of married-couple households without children held fairly steady in all countries except Japan, where such families rose from 16 percent to 28 percent of all households, and Canada, which recorded an increase from 27 percent to 32 percent. These households are actually a diverse group, comprising young couples who have not yet started their families, childless couples, and older couples whose children have left home. Thus, some of the couples who appeared as those with children in earlier years have now moved into the category of those without children.

Overall, married-couple households accounted for about 3 out of every 4 households in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom at the beginning of the 1960's. They represented 6 or 7 of every 10 households in Japan, Germany, and Sweden at that time, and probably slightly more than 7 of every 10 in France. By the mid- to late 1980's, such households represented fewer than 2 out of every 3 households in all countries except Japan. The United States, Germany, and Sweden (and probably also Denmark) had the lowest proportion of married-couple households, about 55 percent. Excluding unmarried cohabiting couples, Sweden had well below half (44 percent) of all households in this category in 1985. If cohabitants classified elsewhere had been included in the U.S. figures for married couples, the late 1980's proportion would have been slightly over 60 percent of all households.

Rise of the consensual union

As noted previously, there has been a rapid increase in the incidence of cohabitation outside of marriage in a number of countries. Such arrangements became much more widespread in the 1970's and, by the 1980's, received more general acceptance in public opinion. For some couples, particularly younger ones, consensual unions may be a temporary arrangement that eventually leads to marriage. For others, it is an alternative to the institution of marriage.

A recent public opinion survey in Germany revealed increasing acceptance of marriages without licenses. The percentage of respondents who disapproved of couples living together without being legally married dropped from 36

Almost all developed countries have seen a decline in fertility rates, aging of the population, an erosion of the institution of marriage, and a rapid increase in childbirths out of wedlock.

percent in 1982 to 27 percent in 1989, and correspondingly, the notion that unmarried couples should enjoy the same legal recognition and advantages as married couples received more support.[7] Germany is a country where the number of consensual unions has remained low, compared with the rest of Europe.

The high marriage rate in the United States means that, so far at least, the country has maintained a fairly low level of nonmarital cohabitation, a rate lower than in most European countries and in a different league entirely from Scandinavia. The Census Bureau reports the number of households comprising two unrelated adults of the opposite sex, with or without children. Although some may be roommate or landlord-tenant arrangements, most of these households can be viewed as consensual unions.[8] None are included in the married-couple data in table 6; rather, they are classified in the "other households" group. According to the Census Bureau data, the incidence of such arrangements has risen from 1.2 percent of all couples living together in 1970 to 3.1 percent in 1980 and 4.7 percent in 1988. Moreover, these percentages are understated to the extent that people in common-law marriages report themselves as married couples and are, therefore, not included in these statistics. By definition, no more than two unrelated adults are present in an unmarried-couple household, but the household also may contain one or more children. About 3 out of every 10 unmarried-couple households included a child under 15 (not age 18, as in other U.S. statistics on children) in 1988, slightly higher than the proportion for 1980. Thus, a minority of consensual unions in the United States involve a parent-child family group.

The U.S. figures on consensual unions are low in comparison with those of Europe and Canada. In Canada, 8 percent of all couples lived in common-law marriages in 1986, and all are included among the married couples in table 6.

Sweden and the Netherlands have recorded rapid increases in consensual unions. In Sweden, the proportion of such unions rose from only 1 percent of all couples in 1960 to 11 percent in 1975 and 19 percent in 1985. In the Netherlands, the ratio rose from 11 percent in 1982 to 19 percent in 1988. Thus, about 1 in every 5 couples in these two countries is living together out of wedlock.

Denmark reports that the number of couples in consensual unions with joint children rose from 4 percent of all families with children in 1982 to 8 percent in 1988. The proportion of all consensual unions among couples living together is undoubtedly far higher.

In France, nonmarital cohabitation increased from 3 percent of all couples in 1975 to more than 6 percent in 1982 and 8 percent in 1988. Table 7, which shows the percent of all French men and women in consensual unions or marriages by age group in 1988, illustrates the fact that cohabitation occurs predominantly in the younger age groups.

As in France, the younger age groups in Sweden have a higher incidence of cohabitation. For instance, in 1980, 4 out of every 5 unmarried Swedish men ages 20 to 24 were living in a consensual union, as were 68 percent of all unmarried women in that age group. In the age group 25 to 29, the proportions were 49 percent and 35 percent, respectively. Virtually all Swedes now cohabit before marriage.[9]

Sweden has long been permissive about premarital sexual relations, and even in the 1950's it was not uncommon for marriages to occur around the time the first child was to be born. The difference today is that nonmarital cohabitation is regarded legally and culturally as an accepted alternative, rather than a prelude to marriage. This is reflected by the fact that the average period over which Swedish couples remain unmarried lengthens each year, with a growing number never marrying at all.[10] The rapidly declining influence of childbirth on marriage is brought into focus by the data presented earlier on the percentage of children born out of wedlock. Statistics Sweden has been modifying its family statistics to take into account the in-

Table 7. **Percent of French men and women in marriages or consensual unions, by age, 1988**

Sex and age	Married	In consensual union
Men:		
18–24	4.7	6.1
18–19	0	1
20–24	6.5	8.4
25–29	42.7	14.5
30–34	67.6	9.8
35 and over	78.7	3.4
Women:		
18–24	14.0	10.4
18–19	7	1.8
20–24	19.0	13.7
25–29	58.9	12.3
30–34	71.7	7.8
35 and over	63.5	2.1

SOURCE: Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, *Enquête sur l'emploi de 1988: résultats détaillés* [Labor Force Survey of 1988: Detailed Results], Les Collections de l'INSEE, Serie D, no. 128 (Paris, INSEE, October 1988), table MEN-07, pp. 104–05.

creasing incidence of cohabitation. Thus, figures on family formation and family dissolution are replacing data on marriage and divorce, respectively.

British surveys also indicate that consensual unions have become more prevalent there.[11] The proportion of women ages 18 to 49 who were cohabiting more than doubled between 1979 and 1987. In the latter year, about 11 percent of all women ages 18 to 24 were cohabiting, about the same proportion as in France for this age group. The figure for British women ages 25 to 49 was 5 percent. Cohabitation is more prevalent at ages 25 to 29 for men and ages 20 to 24 for women. British men tend to be a few years older than their partners, as is the case in France and Sweden. Women and men who are divorced are more likely than those of other marital status to be cohabiting.

Estimates for Germany indicate that consensual unions have not reached significant proportions there. In 1981, only about 3 percent of all couples were cohabiting outside of marriage. However, the increase in numbers has been great, from 100,000 in 1972 to 440,000 in 1981. These figures may well be too low, because some German couples living in consensual unions claim to be married.[12]

The rise of the consensual union is a significant move away from the traditional nuclear form of the family. In particular, there is a higher rate of family dissolution among unmarried as opposed to married couples in all countries. Thus, where consensual unions are significantly numerous, official divorce statistics do not encompass the extent of family breakup.

Single-parent families increase

Intercountry comparisons of single-parent families are restricted by variations in definitions. The main issues relate to the upper age limit for children and the presence or absence of cohabiting parents. (See appendix.) For the comparison presented in table 8, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has obtained data for recent years using the under-18 age limit for children—the U.S. definition—allowing for more valid international comparisons of lone-parent households.

All countries shown in table 8, except Japan, have experienced significant increases in single-parent households as a proportion of all family households with children. Allowing for definitional differences, it is clear that the United States has the highest proportion of single-parent households. (See chart 1.) In 1988, more than 1 in 5 U.S. households with dependent children were single-parent households, up from fewer than 1 in 10 in 1960. Only Denmark approaches the U.S. level in the 1980's, and the Danish data are overstated because they count single-parent families instead of households; that is, they include single parents who are part of a larger household, while the U.S. figures exclude such parents. (In 1987, one-parent family groups in the United States represented 27 percent of all families with children; this figure is more comparable to the Danish proportion of 20 percent.) In France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, the incidence of lone parenthood was in the range of 10 percent to 15 percent of all households with children. Using the under-18 age limit, Sweden's proportion of lone-parent families in 1985 was closer to the U.S. proportion in 1980, but well below the U.S. figure in 1988. Of the countries covered in table 8, Japan had by far the lowest incidence of single parenthood: 5 percent to 6 percent of all households with children in the period since 1960. This is to be expected, given the low rates of divorce and births out of wedlock in Japan.

The paths to single parenthood are numerous. Marriage and childbirth with subsequent widowhood, separation or divorce, and childbirth without marriage or consensual union. Combinations of events may lead to an exit from or reentry into single-parent status—for example, divorce and subsequent remarriage. The growth in the number of single-parent families has some common demographic elements in all the countries studied.

There has been a rapid increase in the incidence of cohabitation outside of marriage in a number of countries.

In Europe and North America, there is a growing proportion of those entering single parenthood through marital dissolution (separation and divorce) and childbirth outside marriage, and a diminishing share arising through the premature death of a spouse. Prior to the last three decades, single-parent families were usually formed as the result of the death of one of the parents.

A recent study indicates that, with the exception of the United States, the growth of divorced and separated mothers was responsible for the vast majority of the net increase in one-parent families since 1970.[13] In the United States, family dissolution also accounted for the majority of the net increase, but the growing number of never-married mothers contributed about 40 percent of the increase as well. Even in Japan, divorce or separation has become the predominant route to single parenthood.

Another common characteristic is that the great majority of single-parent households are headed by women. In every country, 85 to 90 percent of all heads of single-parent families are women.

In all countries, single-parent families frequently have low incomes, and they are more likely than other families to experience poverty. Families headed by women are often in economic difficulty because of the absence of the father and his resources, the limited earnings of many women, and the immense difficulties of reconciling paid work and family obligations. The pressures on countries to address the requirements of these families efficiently and effectively are increasing.

Indicative of the financial instability of such families in the United States is the fact that the average difference between after-tax income and total expenditures of single-parent households in 1984–85 was negative.[14] A recent Bureau of Labor Statistics study indicated that unmarried women maintaining families are the workers with the greatest risk of living in poverty and almost one-fourth of these families are poor.[15] An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development conference paper revealed that lone-parent family incomes were only half as much as two-parent family incomes in the United Kingdom and the United States, a little closer in France, and about four-fifths as

Table 8. Family households with children and single-parent households in nine countries, selected years, 1960–88

(Numbers in thousands)

Country, age limit for children, year	Total family households with children	Single-parent households		Country, age limit for children, year	Total family households with children	Single-parent households	
		Number	Percent of total			Number	Percent of total
United States				Under 25:			
Under 18:				1988	7,532	658	8.7
1960	25,662	2,329	9.1	1975	8,189	726	8.9
1970	28,731	3,199	11.1	1982	8,628	847	9.8
1980	31,022	6,061	19.5	1988	8,613	1,070	12.4
1988	31,920	7,320	22.9	Germany:			
Canada				Under 18:			
Under 18:				1972	8,872	707	8.0
1971	3,078	271	8.8	1980	8,391	879	10.5
1981	3,441	438	12.7	1988	6,916	934	13.5
1986	3,406	503	14.8	Netherlands:			
No limit:				Under 18:			
1981	4,122	638	15.5	1981	2,005	176	8.8
1986	4,335	770	17.8	1985	1,950	240	12.3
Under 25:				No limit:			
1961	12,725	286	9.8	1961	1,903	177	9.3
1971	13,391	408	12.0	1971	2,270	202	8.9
Japan				1981	2,522	309	12.3
Under 18:				1985	2,527	378	14.9
1960	11,839	707	6.0	Sweden:			
1970	14,228	710	5.0	Under 18:			
1980	16,147	786	4.9	1985	1,051	178	16.9
1985	15,836	940	5.9	Under 16:			
Denmark[2]				1960	1,015	91	9.0
Under 18:				1970	1,019	98	9.6
1976	731	126	17.2	1980	976	110	11.2
1983	717	139	19.4	1985	913	117	12.8
1988	674	137	20.3	United Kingdom[3]			
France				Under 18:[4]			
Under 18:				1981	6,484	387	5.7
1988	7,070	769	10.9	1971	6,8/0	515	7.6
				1981	6,616	916	13.3
				1987	(5)	(5)	12.7

[1] Estimated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics partially from tables 7–9.

[2] Data are from family-based, rather than household-based, statistics. (See note.)

[3] Great Britain only (excludes Northern Ireland).

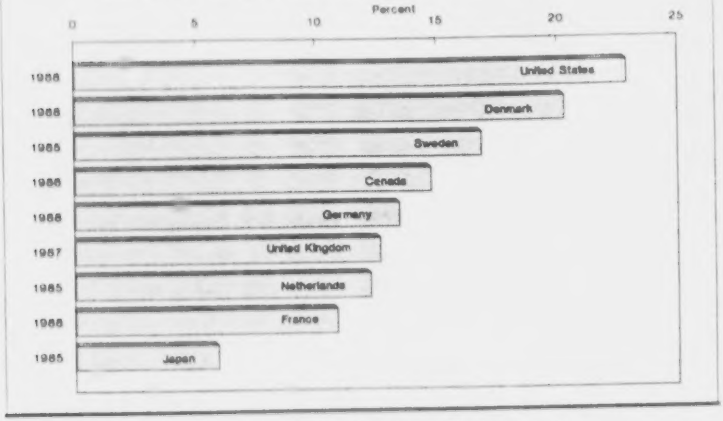
[4] Includes all children under 16 and those ages 16 or 17 who are in full-time education.

[5] Not available because survey data were not inflated to universe levels.

NOTE: Intercountry comparisons should be made with caution due to differing age limits and different treatments of unmarried cohabiting couples across countries. Some households of unmarried cohabitants may be classified as single-parent households in all countries except Canada (1981, 1986), Denmark (1983, 1988), France, and Sweden. Except in Denmark, single-parent households living as part of a larger household are excluded.

SOURCES: Compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics from sources listed in table 6, unpublished data provided by foreign statistical offices and John Ermisch, "Demographic Aspects of the Growing Number of Lone-Parent Families," Paper No. 2, prepared for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Conference of National Experts on Lone Parents, Paris, Dec. 15–17, 1987.

Chart 1. **Single-parent households as a percent of all households with children under 18, nine countries, latest available year**



much so the Netherlands.[16]

Great Britain was the first among the European countries to carry out an extensive official study of single-parent families, with special attention focused on mothers-only families. The Finer Committee was established by the Government in the early 1970's to study the problems of these families, and a well-publicized report was issued in 1974. The report recommended a policy goal of assuring that single mothers and their children have enough income to provide an adequate standard of living even if the mother is not in the work force, and that it not be assumed that the caretaker should go out to work. The report's recommendations have still not been implemented, and discussion of the problem and the need for more concerted attention continues.[17]

All industrialized countries except the United States have family allowance programs that provide cash payments to families with children. In addition, the Scandinavian countries provide special benefits for single parents. For example, the Swedish Government assumes the responsibility for collecting child support payments from the absent parent. When this parent fails to pay or pays irregularly, the Government makes the payment to the custodial parent, assuring a regular flow of income. The Government also guarantees a minimum level of support for each child. Further, Swedish single parents receive housing allowances, parental leave, and other benefits designed to ease the tension between work and family life. Unlike Great Britain, Sweden assumes that the single parent will work, usually on a part-time basis. Support for single mothers is much more extensive in Sweden than elsewhere; however, recent analyses reveal that single-mother families are still strongly disadvantaged economically.[18]

More persons living alone

Historically, virtually all household units have been families in some form. To live in a household was at the same time to live in a family. This is no longer the case. Many households in modern societies do not contain families, and the one-person household is the most common type of nonfamily household. Except in Japan, this type of household has shown the most rapid growth of all household types since 1960.

In the United States, one-person households increased their share from 13 percent of all households in 1960 to virtually one-quarter of all households in 1988. (See table 6.) France,

the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom reached about the same level in the 1980's. Sweden and Germany have even higher proportions of single-person households. In Germany, they make up about 3 out of every 10 households;[19] in Sweden, they are approaching 4 out of every 10. Meanwhile, Canada and Japan have much lower proportions of these households than the other countries, about 1 out of every 5.

Except in Japan, the one-person household has shown the most rapid growth of all household types since 1960.

The fastest growing groups in the living-alone category tend to be young people in their late teens and twenties, the divorced and separated, and the elderly. In many cases, living alone is the voluntary choice of people who can afford separate housing coupled with the increased availability of such housing; higher personal incomes and pensions over the past three decades have allowed people who want to live alone to do so. From this point of view, living alone can be seen as a privilege of affluent people and an expression of individual autonomy.[20]

Sweden has built a large number of apartments in urban areas that are ideal for single people. This new housing has helped to increase the incidence of living alone in all age groups, especially among the young and middle aged, for whom living alone had been a historical rarity. In Sweden, the fastest growth in living alone has been among the younger age groups.[21]

A French study reveals that one-person households grow with the degree of urbanization.[22] That is, rural people tend to live in families, whereas urban people increasingly live alone. In Paris, for example, nearly 50 percent of the dwellings are one-person households. Swedish studies also find that one-person households are predominantly in urban areas, and this is likely to be true in all countries.[23]

A five-country study of living arrangements of young adults looked at how income from various sources affected the decision to live alone.[24] The study showed that German youth had a much higher propensity to live separately than did young people in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, or Australia. Among the five countries, youth in the United States and the United Kingdom had the lowest propensities to live alone. Earnings levels were positively correlated with living alone in the United States and the United Kingdom, and to a lesser extent in Australia, but in Germany there was no such correlation.

At the other end of the age spectrum, the proportion of the elderly living alone is generally high and increasing. The proportion of persons 65 years of age or older living by themselves at various times during the 1980's is given in the following tabulation:[25]

Country	Percent living alone
United States	30.4
Canada	27.7
Japan	8.6
Denmark	38.3
France	32.6
Germany	38.9
Netherlands	31.3
Sweden	40.0
United Kingdom	30.3

In Japan, the figure is low because nearly 65 percent of the elderly still live with their children in either two- or three-generation households. There is a sharp contrast between East and West in this area: among persons age 75 or older in Japan, fully three-quarters live with their children; in the United States, about 1 in 4 persons 65 or older lives with his or her children.[26]

Women outlive men, on average, and women tend to be younger than their spouses. Therefore, the proportion of elderly women living alone is much higher than that of elderly men in all countries studied. In the United States, about 16 percent of all men and 40 percent of all women 65 and older live alone. These proportions are similar to those for the European countries, except that in Germany and Scandinavia, about half of all elderly women live alone. In all the countries studied, women constitute about four-fifths of all one-person households maintained by people 65 and older.

The importance of elderly citizens in overall national household profiles is apparent in the percentage of single-person households in the countries studied that were maintained by an elderly person. In Germany, more than 30 percent of all households are one-person households, and half of these are individuals age 65 or older. Thus, more than 15 percent of all households in Germany consist of one elderly person. In the United Kingdom, about two-thirds of single-person households consist of one elderly person, and proportions for Denmark, France, and the Netherlands are also high. In the United States, persons 65 and older account for 40 percent of all persons living alone.

Among older persons, living alone is most often the result of having outlived a spouse. Consequently, the likelihood of living alone increases with age, although there may be a decline at the oldest ages, when the elderly enter nursing homes or homes for the aged or take in companions or boarders in a search for additional income or assistance.[27]

Both numbers and proportions of elderly living alone have risen sharply during the past three decades, although the rise in the propor-

tion may be leveling off in North America. The number of elderly residing alone in the United Kingdom more than doubled between 1961 and 1981. In Germany, 37 percent of all widows lived alone in 1961; by 1981, the proportion was up to 63 percent. These figures partly reflect the large number of postwar widows still living with their children in 1961, but who lived alone by 1981 as their children married and moved away. For widowers, the proportion living alone rose from 41 percent to 72 percent. Among persons who were divorced, the proportion living alone hardly changed, as remarriage and cohabitation were choices that were preferred to living alone. German data also indicate a strong increase in never-married persons living alone.[28]

Mothers at work

The developed countries have witnessed notable increases in women's labor force participation since 1960, with an acceleration in the 1970's. More and more, these increases have involved mothers of dependent children, with profound effects on family life because of the problems of reconciling employment with family responsibilities. Consequently, the availability of child care facilities has become a significant issue for many families in these countries.

As women have entered the work force in increasing numbers, marriages have been postponed, the average size of the family has declined, and the divorce rate has risen. The increased economic independence of women, through labor force activity, has been a major factor behind changes in the traditional family over the past three decades.

The increases in women's labor force participation have been universal across age groups, except for teenagers in Japan and Europe and elderly women in all the countries studied. Most dramatic has been the rise in labor force participation for women 25 to 34 years of age, as shown in the following tabulation:

Country	*1970*	*1988*
United States	44.7	72.6
Canada	*41.2	74.9
Japan	46.8	54.5
Denmark	**	90.0
France	52.2	74.5
Germany	47.6	61.5
Italy (ages 25–39)	***44.1	60.8
Netherlands	23.9	55.4
Sweden	60.7	89.4
United Kingdom	43.3	66.0

*Data estimated
**Data not available
***1971 data

Table 9. Labor force participation rates of all women under age 60[1] and women with children under the ages of 18 and 3, eight countries, 1986 or 1988[2]

[In percent]

Country	All women	All women with children		Lone mothers[3] with children	
		Under 18 years old	Under 3 years old	Under 18 years old	Under 3 years old
United States	68.5	66.0	52.5	65.3	45.1
Canada	68.8	*67.0	58.4	*53.6	41.3
Denmark	70.2	88.1	83.0	85.6	80.9
Germany	56.8	68.4	39.7	69.7	50.4
France	60.1	65.8	60.1	66.2	59.6
Italy	43.3	43.9	46.0	67.2	66.0
Sweden	80.0	*89.4	*86.8	(4)	(4)
United Kingdom	64.3	59.7	36.9	51.6	23.4

[1] Women ages 60 to 64 are included in Canada and Sweden. Lower age limits are 16 for the United States and Sweden, 15 for Canada, and 14 for all other countries. For participation rates of women with children, no upper limit is applied for the United States or Canada. These differences do not distort the comparisons because very few women under 16 have children, while few women over 60 live with their children.

[2] Data for the United States are for March 1988; Canada and Sweden—annual averages for 1988; data for all other countries are for spring 1986.

[3] Includes divorced, separated, never-married, and widowed women.

[4] Children under 18 years.

[5] Children under 7 years.

[6] Not available.

Sources: Published data from U.S., Canadian, and Swedish labor force surveys; unpublished data for other countries provided by the Statistical Office of the European Communities from the European Community labor force surveys.

Women ages 25 to 34 are in the primary childbearing and childrearing ages. In most of the countries shown, fewer than half of such women were in the work force in 1970. By 1988, a substantial majority were in the labor force, except in Japan and the Netherlands. Still, the Dutch women increased their participation from a low among these countries of 24 percent in 1970 to 55 percent in 1988.

Swedish women were already participating at a comparatively high rate of 60 percent in 1970, and by 1988, almost 9 out of every 10 Swedish women ages 25 to 34 were in the labor force. Danish and Swedish women in this age group had the highest participation rates, by far.

Table 9 focuses on participation rates of women with children under the age of 18 and under the age of 3 in a recent year in eight countries. Except for Italy, women with younger children tended to have lower participation rates than women with children under age 18. Danish and Swedish women continued to stand out, with more than 8 out of every 10 women with younger children participating in the work force. (The Swedish proportions are based on women with children under age 7; proportions for those with children under age 3 would be somewhat lower.) French and Cana-

dian women, with about 6 out of 10 economically active, were second to the Scandinavian women. In the United States, about 5 out of 10 women with children under age 3 were in the labor force. The participation rates for German and British women were substantially lower than in the other countries.

Although no historical data are shown in table 9, it is clear that there has been a dramatic increase in participation rates of women with younger children. For example, about 40 percent of Swedish women with children under the age of 7 (the age at which compulsory schooling begins) were employed in 1970; today, 85 percent are working. In Canada, women's overall participation rate increased from 45 percent in 1976 to 55 percent in 1986, and the greatest increase involved women with children under 3 years of age.

More than other advanced industrial societies, Sweden has explicitly recognized the dilemmas of employed parents and has adopted programs to address them.

Table 9 also shows participation rates for mothers without partners. In the United States, Canada, Denmark, and the United Kingdom, single mothers with young children had lower participation rates than all mothers with young children. By contrast, in France, Germany, and Italy, single mothers of young children had higher participation rates than their married counterparts.

The dramatic growth in female participation in the labor force has contributed toward substantial political pressures for more child care services in all the countries studied. Decades of both national and international debate, task forces, and commissions have resulted in a wide variety of responses. In all the countries, there have been two factors besides the participation of women in the labor force that have fueled the increase in demand for child care. Changes in family structure and changing parental attitudes and needs. As regards the first, with smaller families, there are fewer relatives to care for young children. Also, additional pressure for child care facilities has been brought about by the rise in single-parent families. Concerning parental attitudes, in the past, most parents preferred to raise their children during the early years within the family environment. Now, however, more and more families, whether the mother is working or not, are turning to day care centers, nurseries, and preschool programs to foster the intellectual, social, and emotional development of their children. As an example, preference studies in Canada show that both working and nonworking parents have a high propensity to choose licensed day care for children ages 3 to 5. There appears to be less preference for infant care, although studies vary in their conclusions as to whether this is so.[29]

There are wide differences in child care services across countries. In Europe, broadly speaking, the highest levels are found in Denmark, Sweden, and France, and the lowest in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. As a percent of gross national product, Denmark spends more than six times as much for services for children under age 5 than does the United Kingdom. In Denmark, 44 percent of all children age 2 or younger attend publicly funded day care facilities on a full-time basis. This contrasts with 1 percent to 2 percent of all very young children in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, and 16 percent to 17 percent in France. In the United States, one estimate indicates that about 20 percent of children under the age of 3 were in day care in 1984–85, largely part time. About 12 percent of children under age 3 were in day care in Canada.[30]

In all of the countries, the supply of publicly funded services is inadequate relative to the demand. Even in Denmark, with its high level of services and its population of only 5 million, present waiting lists suggest an unmet need of approximately 40,000 spaces.[31] Sweden also has a shortage of full-time day care spaces. About 55,000 children who need a place cannot be served. The Swedish Parliament recently decided that all children older than 1½ years whose parents are working shall have a right to public day care after the year 1991.[32]

Canada's National Day Care Information Center estimates that licensed day care facilities serve only 7 percent of the need for spaces for children under 18 months of age. Overall, licensed day care facilities serve 12 percent of the estimated need for spaces for Canadian children age 12 and under.[33]

Public debate regarding the possible negative effects of employment on parenting has been nowhere more spirited than in Sweden. Consequently, Sweden has adopted legislative reforms expressly intended to alleviate the contradictions between work and family needs. These reforms include paid parental leave for either father or mother, time off from work to take care of a sick child, publicly supported day care, and the option of part-time work for parents of preschool children. There is widespread acceptance of these parental supports throughout the country.[34] More than other advanced industrial societies, Sweden has explicitly recognized the dilemmas of employed parents and has adopted programs to address them.

One aspect of the Swedish family support system bears further mention. Swedish parents have the right to stay home and take care of their newborn infant for quite a long time without risk of losing their jobs. They are guaranteed an

economic standard corresponding to their previous salary, paid by the social insurance system. Up to 1977, the time during which financial support was provided was limited to 7 months; it has subsequently been increased in stages to 15 months as of July 1989, the last 3 of which, however, are funded at a greatly reduced level. By mid-1991, parental leave will be available for 18 months with full financial benefits.[35] Either mother or father can take advantage of the parental leave, or they can take turns. No other country offers such a generous system of parental leave.

Like Sweden, Denmark provides extensive family support programs that have eased the entry of a very high proportion of mothers into the labor force. Women employees have a right to be absent from work for 4 weeks prior to childbirth. After the baby's birth, the mother has a right to be absent from work a total of 24 weeks, of which up to 10 weeks may be used by the father. During their parental leaves, the mother and father are entitled to cash payments in compensation for their loss of income amounting to a maximum of 2,126 kroner per week, the equivalent of 67 percent of average industrial wages. Parents with low incomes receive 90 percent of their former pay, and those with high incomes receive the stipulated weekly maximum.[36]

Conclusion

During the past three decades, the family has undergone major transformations in all developed countries. The general direction of household composition patterns suggests a common contemporary trend to which all developed countries are a party, to a greater or lesser degree. Four major demographic developments—declining fertility, aging of the population, rising divorce rates, and an increasing incidence of childbirth out of wedlock—are underlying factors in the transformation of the modern family.

Japan is the most traditional society of the countries studied, with very low rates of divorce and births out of wedlock. It was the only country with an increase in the proportion of married-couple households since 1960. But even in Japan, the traditional nuclear family—mother, father, and children—lost ground. And Japan preceded the other countries in the decline in fertility rates.

Among the countries studied, the United States is either a leader or a follower, depending on the trend. We are a country of relative family traditionalism, as evidenced by our greater tendency to marry, and at an earlier age, than persons in other countries and to have slightly larger families; moreover, our rate of nonmarital cohabitation is still relatively low, compared with European countries, and so is our tendency to live alone. Women with young children in Scandinavia and France are well ahead of their American counterparts with respect to labor force participation and access to child care services.

Nonetheless, the United States is by no means a land of family stability. We have long had the highest incidence of divorce and single-parent families. The United States surpasses even Scandinavia in its nontraditionalism in regard to these two indicators. Thus, in some respects, this Nation is catching up to other developed countries, but in certain other respects, the rest of the developed world is following the United States. □

Footnotes

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The author thanks the following persons in national statistical offices for providing special tabulations and expert interpretation of their data: Pierre Parent, Statistics Canada; Anita Lange, Danish Statistical Office; O. Marchand, French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies; Hans-Ludwig Mayer and Hannelore Proehl, German Federal Statistical Office; J.T.M. Laanen, C.A. Van Bochove, and G. Bruinooge, Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics; and Sten Johansson, Director General, and Leif Heinstedt, Statistics Sweden. Thanks also to Barbara Torrey, Chief, Center for International Research, U.S. Bureau of the Census, and her staff, for providing advice and relevant statistical publications, to Neil Bain of the Statistical Office of the European Communities, for providing unpublished tabulations from the Communities' labor force surveys; and to Todd Godbout of the Division of Foreign Labor Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for translating numerous French documents.

[1] *Ageing Populations: The Social Policy Implications* (Paris, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1988), p. 12.

[2] David Popenoe, *Disturbing the Nest: Family Change and Decline in Modern Societies* (New York, Aldine De Gruyter, 1988), p. 283.

[3] Jean-Paul Sardon, "Évolution de la nuptialité et de la divortialité en Europe depuis la fin des années 1960" [Movement in Marriage and Divorce Rates in Europe since the Late 1960's], *Population*, no. 3, May–June 1986, pp. 463–82. *Population* is the journal of the French National Institute of Demographic Studies.

[4] Popenoe, *Disturbing the Nest*, p. 173.

[5] United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook 1986* (New York, United Nations, 1988), tables 23 and 33.

[6] Karl Schwarz, "Les ménages en République Fédérale d'Allemagne: 1961, 1972, 1981" [Households in the Federal Republic of Germany: 1961, 1972, 1981], *Population*, no. 3, May–June 1983, pp. 565–83.

[7] Study by Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Re-

scratch, as reported in "The Week in Germany," German Information Center, New York, Sept. 8, 1989, p. 7.

[8] *Households, Families, Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1988, Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 432 (Advance Report) (Bureau of the Census, September 1988), p. 2.

[9] Popenoe, *Disturbing the Nest*, p. 170. Popenoe states that only an estimated 2 percent of Swedish women marrying today have not previously cohabited with their husbands-to-be or with some other man, compared with nearly 50 percent of women born in the 1930's.

[10] Popenoe, pp. 170–71.

[11] Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *General Household Survey 1988* (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1989), pp. 23–24.

[12] Schwarz, "Les ménages," pp. 572–74.

[13] John Ermisch, "Demographic Aspects of the Growing Number of Lone-Parent Families," Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Conference of National Experts on Lone Parents, Paris, Dec. 15–17, 1987, Paper No. 2, pp. 3–6.

[14] Mark Lino, "Financial Status of Single Parent Households," *Family Economics Review*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1989, p. 6.

[15] Bruce W. Klein and Philip L. Rones, "A profile of the working poor," *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1989, p. 3.

[16] Michael O'Higgins, "Lone Parent Families in OECD Countries: Numbers and Socio-Economic Characteristics," Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Conference of National Experts on Lone Parents, Paris, Dec. 15–17, 1987, Paper No. 3, pp. 26–33. For international comparisons of poverty rates among children, see Timothy M. Smeeding and Barbara B. Torrey, "Poor Children in Rich Countries," *Science*, Nov. 11, 1988, pp. 873–77. See also Elizabeth Dolan, "Lone-Parenthood and the Low-Income Trap," *OECD Observer*, August–September 1988, pp. 22–25, and Gertrude S. Goldberg and Eleanor Kremen, *Feminization of Poverty: Only in America?* (New York, Greenwood Press, forthcoming).

[17] For a discussion of policies regarding single-parent families in the United States and abroad, see Sheila B. Kamerman and Alfred J. Kahn, *Mothers Alone: Strategies for a Time of Change* (Dover, MA, Auburn House, 1988).

[18] Kamerman and Kahn, *Mothers Alone*, pp. 95–100.

[19] The German figures on one-person households in table 6 are inflated somewhat by the practice (unique to Germany) of double-counting people who maintain more than one household. For example, the same person can have two households if he or she uses a rented apartment because of work in a city other than the one in which the principal residence is maintained. This second household is counted as a single-person household in the German statistics. See Louis Roussel, "Évolution récente de la structure des ménages dans quelques pays industriels" [Recent trends in the structure of households in several industrialized countries], *Population*, no. 6, November–December 1986, p. 916.

[20] Popenoe, *Disturbing the Nest*, p. 194.

[21] Popenoe, p. 176. See also Thora Nilsson, "Les ménages en Suède, 1960–1980," [Households in Sweden, 1960–1980], *Population*, no. 2, Mar.–Apr. 1985, pp. 234–41.

[22] Jean Pierre Courson and Michel de Saboulin, "Ménages et familles: vers de nouveaux modes de vie?" [Households and Families: New Ways of Life?] *Économie et Statistique*, March 1985, pp. 3–20.

[23] Popenoe, *Disturbing the Nest*, p. 326.

[24] Kathleen S. Short and Thesia I. Garner, "Living Arrangements of Young Adults Living Independently: Evidence from the Luxembourg Income Study," paper presented at the 35th Annual Conference of the American Council on Consumer Interests, Baltimore, MD, Mar. 29–Apr. 1, 1989.

[25] Kevin Kinsella, *Living Arrangements of the Elderly and Social Policy: A Cross-National Perspective*, staff paper (Bureau of the Census, Center for International Research, forthcoming).

[26] Samuel H. Preston and Shigemi Kono, "Trends in Well-Being of Children and the Elderly in Japan," chapter 11 in John L. Palmer and others, eds., *The Vulnerable* (Washington, Urban Institute Press, 1988), p. 282.

[27] Kinsella, *Living Arrangements*.

[28] Schwarz, "Les ménages," pp. 574–88.

[29] Glenn Drover, "Child Care in Canada: A Social Service Approach," paper prepared for a workshop on child care policies and programs sponsored by International Perspectives, National Academy of Sciences Summer Study Center at Woods Hole, MA, Aug. 9, 1988, p. 9.

[30] Sheila B. Kamerman, "Child Care Policies and Programs: An International Overview," paper prepared for workshop on child care policies and programs, Woods Hole, MA, p. 4.

[31] Peter Moss, "Comments from a European Community Perspective," paper prepared for workshop on child care policies and programs, Woods Hole, MA, p. 8.

[32] Soren Kindlund, "Child Care in Sweden," paper prepared for workshop on child care policies and programs, Woods Hole, MA, pp. 3–4.

[33] Drover, "Child Care in Canada," table 5, p. 27.

[34] Phyllis Moen, *Working Parents: Transformations in Gender Roles and Public Policies in Sweden* (Madison, WI, University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 15. See also Bengt-Erik Andersson, "Effects of Public Day Care—A Longitudinal Study," paper prepared for workshop on child care policies and programs, Woods Hole, MA.

[35] *The Swedish Budget 1989/90* (Stockholm, Ministry of Finance, 1989), p. 83.

[36] Jacob Vedel-Petersen, "Child Care Policies and Programs in Denmark," paper prepared for workshop on child care policies and programs, Woods Hole, MA, pp. 16–17.

APPENDIX: Concepts and definitions

For the United States, trends in the family can be analyzed from the point of view of two types of related statistics: Those based on all households and those based on families. For international comparison, the data presented here are based on all households rather than families because they are more readily available, are more comparable across countries, and cover a longer span of time than most family-based data. In addition, nonfamily households—primarily one-person households—have been the fastest growing household type, and their increase is one of the factors affecting the changing composition of family households.

Households take many forms and are not limited to families. For example, in 1988 there were 91 million households, but 65 million families, in the United States. Households contain family members residing together, but they also may include nonfamily members sharing the dwelling. One person living alone represents a household, but not a family. By the U.S. definition, a family is two or more persons residing together and related by blood, adoption, or marriage. A household is one or more persons sharing the same housing unit. Yet, households are the basic unit of family life, and in the majority of cases, the household and the family coincide. Analysis of household composition across countries allows us to see how all of a society's population—not just families—lives.

It would have been interesting to show a family-nonfamily breakdown of household types across countries; however, definitional differences precluded this kind of breakdown. In the other countries studied, the concept of a family is generally more restrictive than the U.S. definition, limited to married (or cohabiting) couples with or without children and single-parent families. Households comprising brothers and sisters and other family configurations are counted as family households in the United States, but not in these other countries. Multifamily households are also treated differently. In the United States, such households are classified according to the status of the family that includes the householder. Abroad, multifamily households are classified as a separate category and not allocated to any particular family type. However, the number of such households is small in all the countries studied, and the difference in treatment should have no significant impact on the household comparisons in this article.

For most countries, household composition data were available back to 1960 or 1961, but for France the series began in 1968 and for Denmark in 1976. Data for Italy could not be shown at all, due to definitional changes over the period studied. Household statistics for Denmark were not available in terms of the classifications of table 6; therefore, proportions derived from family-based data are shown instead. These are not comparable with the figures for the other countries, but they illustrate the more recent trends in Denmark.

The figures in table 6 are generally based upon national population censuses and labor force surveys with broadly comparable household definitions across countries, although there are some definitional differences that do not allow full comparability. Among these differences are the concepts of a married couple and a child.

Married couples. The classification "married couple" increasingly includes couples living together that are not legally married. The 1980 United Nations recommendations for population censuses states that "couples living in consensual unions should be regarded as married couples." (See United Nations, *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, Statistical Papers, Series M., No. 67, p. 72.) However, this is not always the case in the statistics for the countries studied. In fact, such couples are generally categorized as nonfamily households in U.S. data, rather than as married couples. In the United States, the reported number of married couples depends upon the answers of survey respondents. Those who are in common-law marriages may respond that they are married; if so, they are classified as married couples. Those who say that they are unmarried partners, friends, or roommates are classified as nonfamily households if there are no children present. However, if there are children, the household is classified as a family household if the children are those of the reference person or "householder." In this case, the grouping could even be classified as a single-parent household, despite the fact that there are two cohabiting "parents" in the household.

Although most countries follow the U.S. method of self-reporting of marital status, some countries are more explicit in their treatment of persons of the opposite sex living together but not married. Since 1981, the Canadian census questionnaire has directed such persons to classify themselves as husband-and-wife couples. Since 1980, all cohabiting couples are classified together in Swedish household statistics, whereas earlier censuses classified married couples as a separate category. The Swedish data presented in table 6 for 1970 have been adjusted to include unmarried cohabiting couples. Data for 1960 were not adjusted because the number of unmarried cohabitants was believed to be insignificant. French household statistics report data on "couples" whether married or not, and separate data are collected on married and unmarried cohabitants. All French couples have been classified as married couples in table 6.

Families with children. The national definitions of families with children vary considerably because of differences in the age limits delineating a child. Most countries count as children all unmarried persons under a certain age and living at home or away at school. The United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom consider children to be all those under the age of 18, except that the United Kingdom counts 16- and 17-year-olds only if they are in full-time education. In Sweden, children are defined as all those age 16 and under. Canada (since 1981), Germany, and the Netherlands impose no age limit in their classi-

fication of children, although earlier Canadian censuses used a limit of under 25 years of age. Denmark counts as children all those under the age of 26, while France counts those under the age of 25. The Danish and Canadian Statistical Offices have provided special tabulations for table 6 based on the under-age-18 cutoff. However, the other countries using different age limits were not able to provide such data, although some provided a year or two of recent data on the under-age-18 limit for comparisons of single-parent households in table 8.

The differences in age limits for children have an impact on the comparisons of married couples with and without children and of single-parent households. Therefore, it should be recognized that the proportions in table 6 for these types of households are on a different basis for France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden than for the other countries, which use or have provided data on the basis of the under-age-18 cutoff. The effect of these differences on the classification of households can be seen in table 8.

Single-parent households. The main issues in comparing single-parent households across countries relate to the definition of a child and the presence or absence of cohabiting parents in the statistics. A further issue, which involves all countries except Denmark, is that the household statistics on single-parent families understate the number of such families because they exclude single-parent families that are part of a larger household. These differences affect both the cross-country comparisons and the trends in different countries over time.

The age of children in families encompassed by the term "single-parent family" differs across countries. Ideally, the concept should cover families with one or more unmarried children who live at home (or are away at school) and receive their financial support from the parent. As discussed earlier, there is little agreement across countries as to the specific age limit required for an individual to qualify as a child of a single-parent family. However, all countries that do not use the U.S. age limit of under 18 were able to provide unpublished tabulations with this age limit for one or more years. These data are shown in the single-parent household comparisons in table 8. They indicate that higher age limits produce higher proportions of single-parent households.

Another important issue is that the data in table 8 are for households rather than families, except for Denmark. Single-parent households include only those which form a single household on their own. Thus, a single-parent household occurs in household statistics only when the single parent is the head of the household or the reference person for the household. Situations in which single-parent families are part of a larger household—such as a husband-and-wife household with an unmarried daughter and her young child—will be excluded from the figures, except in Denmark. Thus, on this account, the Danish figures are overstated in relation to the other countries. Further, the data for all the other countries understate the true extent of single parenthood, especially in countries where a sizable portion of single parents live in their own parents' or other people's households. British family statistics for 1977, for example, indicate that about three-quarters of single parents were living alone with their children, while about 14 percent lived in their parents' household. The remaining single-parent families lived with other relatives or with nonrelatives. (See Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *Social Trends*, No. 11, 1981, p. 31.)

It would be preferable to define a single-parent household as one in which there is a parent with no cohabitant. In practice, however, cohabitants may be included in the figures for lone parents, except in Canada (1981, 1986), Denmark (1985, 1988), France, and Sweden. For the other countries, it depends on how people classify their status in the surveys and censuses. British statistical investigations indicate that most cohabiting parents describe themselves as married and, therefore, are not classified as single parents. (See Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *General Household Survey*, 1986, p. 11.) However, it should be recognized that the rise in consensual unions in these countries means that the number and growth of one-parent families may be overstated to some extent.

Response of Celinda Lake to David Blankenhorn's Testimony

Celinda Lake of Greenberg-Lake, the Analysis Group, was asked to testify, along with Vince Breglio of Research Strategy Management Inc., before the committee about public opinion on the status of children. Her testimony was based on her knowledge of a large body of research on children that has accumulated over the course of several years, in addition to research conducted by Greenberg-Lake. To take any one poll, even the massive 7,000- interview "State of the Child" survey conducted for the Coalition for America's Children, as the definitive word on the public's attitude toward children would be simplistic for the serious issues facing the Committee. Yet Mr. David Blankenhorn, of the Institute for American Values, focused his testimony on two bipartisan polls undertaken by Greenberg-Lake and the Tarrance Group. As no representative of either Greenberg-Lake or the Tarrance Group was present to refute Mr. Blankenhorn's criticisms, we are submitting a written response to his testimony.

Mr. Blankenhorn provided no sound reasoning or evidence to support his sweeping generalization that any survey question asking about government's role in helping children is, by its very nature, "fundamentally wrong." It is too simplistic, he argued, to ask parents to respond "yes" or "no" on a survey because their concerns are based on more complex feelings. We agree that attitudes are complex. We also think surveys give accurate indications of aspects of that complexity.

While we would like to challenge Mr. Blankenhorn's notion that children need only cultural change, we are pollsters, not policymakers. As such, we will speak only to the main point of Mr. Blankenhorn's testimony -- his assertion that surveys of opinion on government policy toward children are "fundamentally wrong" because Americans are concerned about values, not government policy. We agree that Americans care about values. We take issue, however, with Mr. Blankenhorn's conclusion that because they are concerned about values, Americans do not associate economic decline with children's well-being or look to

government programs to improve children's status. These are not mutually exclusive. In fact, Mr. Blankenhorn's selective presentation of Greenberg-Lake/Tarrance Group polls ignores the evidence in these surveys that voters worry about both. They want help from lots of public and private institutions, including government, for their families.

Mr. Blankenhorn pointed out that parents, when discussing children, use the following language:

"It's not safe anymore to let children go outside and play."
"Drugs can ruin a child's life."
"Television is a bad influence."

We agree wholeheartedly. In fact, if Mr. Blankenhorn had bothered to look beyond question 4 of the 48-question "State of the Child" poll, he would have seen that the bipartisan poll covered these kinds of concerns. It revealed, for example, that 68 percent of Americans worry that "children are not safe in their own neighborhoods."

But this does not indicate, as Mr. Blankenhorn contends, that Americans do not associate government with concerns about children. At present, government is actively engaged in fighting drugs, making the streets safe, and even regulating children's television. Yet Mr. Blankenhorn asks us to believe that Americans don't link government policy with these concerns, and therefore their feelings about children's problems cannot be gauged by a survey question that involves attitudes about government policy. In fact, a number of scholars including Ethel Klein and Howard Shuman have shown that families increasingly have taken what were once private concerns of the family and now look for public help as well. At the same time, voters have mixed feelings about these roles. They still want family decisions to be private and are sensitive to seeing increased taxes for family programs, which we outlined in the original reports.

Mr. Blankenhorn also argued that the following question, because it included a more

detailed elaboration of children's programs than the other agendas listed, was misleading.

If you could tell the politicians in Washington how to spend your tax dollars, which of the following would you make the top priority? (FOLLOW UP:) What would be your second priority? Your Third?

(ROTATE RESPONSES)

• Lower taxes	32
• Provide national health insurance	47
• Fight crime and drugs	42
• Job training & economic development	33
• Clean the environment	25
• Guarantee all children health care, quality education, safe neighborhoods, and economic security	61
• Aid to foreign countries	3
• Protecting social security	28
• Military spending	8
(don't know)	3

Voters are readily familiar with frequently discussed issues like national health insurance, crime and drugs, and lower taxes. But because there has been no extended public debate of children's issues, it is necessary to define the term "children's programs." (Voters, for example, readily associate a specific agenda -- Social Security, Medicare, long-term healthcare -- with the term "senior citizen programs." They do not, however, know what is meant by the term "children's programs.")

To further support his point, Mr. Blankenhorn argued that children's issues were compared with easily beaten issues like "job training and economic development." Does Mr. Blankenhorn believe that in these difficult economic times people would not choose

economic development as a top priority? Can Mr. Blankenhorn name any one critical issue that, if it had been included in this list, he thinks would have gotten more support?

The fact of the matter is, that in hindsight, one can always find a way to dispute a survey finding. However, how many of us, without the benefit of the actual data, would have believed 61 percent of Americans would choose children as the top priority for their tax dollars? We didn't.

If after this explanation, Mr. Blankenhorn and members of the committee still believe that our survey question, through its wording, has influenced the level of concern over children's issues and that voters don't really want government intervention, we would point you to one very toughly worded question on the same survey:

> Would you be much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely to vote for a candidate who supported increased spending for children's programs, even if it meant an increase in your taxes?

Much more likely	19
More likely	48
Less likely	14
Much less likely	7
(No difference) (volunteered)	4
(don't know)	7

This question drew a similar response as the question disputed by Mr. Blankenhorn; in each, roughly two-thirds of voters support making children's programs a high priority for government. We challenge Mr. Blankenhorn to find any bias in this question (if anything, it is biased against children), or any alternative interpretation of the response to it.

While we believe we have successfully answered the questions raised about these

particular surveys, we would also like to reiterate the fact that hundreds of surveys, designed by a wide array of pollsters (many of which were cited in Celinda Lake's initial testimony) point to the public's increasing concern about the status of children. Mr. Blankenhorn would like the committee to believe that these two bipartisan polls are exceptions to the body of research -- exceptions that can be explained by biased survey design. On the contrary, there is an ample body of evidence that demonstrates a widespread yearning for government officials to do more than kiss babies, but instead, for government to respond to the needs of families and help families deal with pressures. These combine with voters' great desire for stronger values in families that Mr. Blankenhorn asserts. These attitudes are both part of the complexity of people's views about public and private roles and their families. They are not mutually exclusive. For those who still do not understand how this complexity of views can be addressed in a survey, they should look to the surveys in their entirety to judge the situation for themselves. We are including, to be placed into the record, copies of the full questionnaires and reports for the Coalition for America's Children and Kids Count polls.

In his book, Why Americans Hate Politics, E.J. Dionne observes that "we are suffering from a false polarization in our politics, in which liberals and conservatives keep arguing about the same things when the country wants to move on." Mr. Blankenhorn's statement would move the country toward a tiresome and stale discussion of which is better for children, values or programs. Our polling would indicate that the public, on both sides of the political aisle, wants to move on.

Celinda Lake, Vice President, Greenberg-Lake, the Analysis Group
Davis Sackett, Vice President, the Tarrance Group

["The Report entitled "State of the Child: America's Opinions on the Health, Education, Safety and Security of our Children Prepared by the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions for the Coalition for America's Children" is retained in select committee files]

kids count

NATIONAL STUDY II
FINAL

CHILDREN
THE TARRANCE GROUP
GREENBERG-LAKE
PERSONAL/CONFIDENTIAL

STUDY # 5023

Hello, I'm _____ of The Tarrance Group, a national research firm. We're calling from our national telephone center. We're talking to people in the nation today about public leaders and issues facing us all.

A. Are you registered to vote in your state and will you be able to vote in the election for President that will be held in November, 1992?

IF "NO", ASK: Is there someone else at home who is registered to vote? (IF "YES", THEN ASK: MAY I SPEAK WITH HIM/HER?)

Yes [CONTINUE]

No [THANK AND TERMINATE]

Thinking ahead to the elections to be held in November of 1992 --

1. Some people usually have the time to vote in every election, while others do not. What are the chances you will have the time to vote in the November elections in 1992? Are you certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50:50, or will you probably not have the time to vote in the November elections?

Certain to vote	81
Probably vote	13
50:50 chance	3
Probably not vote	1
UNSURE (DKR)	1

Thinking for a moment about children in America --

2. Generally, would you say that children in America today are better off or worse off than children were when you were growing up?

IF CHOICE MADE, ASK: And would you say that children today are much (better/worse) off or a little (better/worse) off?

Much better off	14
Little better off	16
UNSURE (DKR)	16
Little worse off	24
Much worse off	31

Still thinking about children for a moment --

3. Would you say that the programs and resources for children in your community and in schools have gotten better or worse over the last five years?

IF CHOICE MADE, ASK: And would you say that they have gotten much (better/worse) or a little (better/worse)?

Much better	17
Little better	31
UNSURE (DKR)	17
Little worse	17
Much worse	18

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kids count

Now, still thinking about children, I'd like to try something a little different. A lot of people in America say that the economy is in trouble, and that this is having an impact on families and their children.

I'm going to read you a list of statements describing some of the ways that people think the declining economy has had the greatest impact on children. Please listen as I read the list and tell me which one statement best says how YOU feel about the effects of the declining economy on children. Here's the first one ... (READ AND ROTATE) IF CHOICE MADE, ASK: And which statement describes how the declining economy has had the next biggest effect on children?

	Q4 The Biggest Effect	Q5 Next Biggest Effect
1) More children don't have basics like sufficient food, clothing or housing in safe neighborhoods.	25	14
2) Children have fewer school and community activities because programs have been cut back or activity fees are too expensive.	10	14
3) More children don't have adequate health insurance and may not get the medical attention they need.	18	17
4) More working parents can't afford acceptable child care and after school care for their children.	14	16
5) Public school education is deteriorating because of budget cuts.	22	19
6) OTHER (SPECIFY) (DON)	1	1
7) UNSURE (DON)	9	20

(END ROTATION)

Now, I'm going to read you a list of measures that some people have said might be taken to relieve the burden on children and their families in these tough economic times. Please listen as I read the list and tell me which one of the measures you think would make the most difference to children and their families. Here's the first one ... (READ AND ROTATE)

	Q6 Most Difference
1) A refundable tax credit for families with children.	18
2) Increased spending for preschool, elementary and secondary education.	16
3) Guaranteed health insurance for all children.	26
4) Publicly-supported child care and after-school programs.	12
5) More family-oriented practices by businesses, such as family and medical leave, and flexible working hours.	19
6) OTHER (SPECIFY) (DON)	2
7) UNSURE (DON)	6

MEMORANDUM

TO: KIDS COUNT

FROM: The Tarrance Group
Greenberg/Lake, The Analysis Group

RE: Bi-partisan poll results

DATE: January 6, 1992

==========

Voters believe children are feeling the effects of a fluctuating economy in a variety of ways and need a broad range of supports from both the private and public sectors. Health insurance and family-oriented business practices top voters' priorities for offsetting the impact of tough economic times on children and their families.

In these difficult economic times, voters worry most about the ability of parents to provide essentials for children -- concerns such as children not having basics like sufficient food, clothing, or housing in safe neighborhoods (25 percent first concern); deterioration of public school education because of budget cuts (22 percent); and children may not be receiving adequate medical attention because of inadequate health insurance coverage (18 percent). Voters overall feel that a lack of affordable child care (14 percent) and reduced after-school and community activities (10 percent) are having a less critical impact on children.

Voters differ in their beliefs about how the declining economy has had the greatest impact on children. For example, younger voters worry more about the declining quality of education (28 percent). Black voters are clearly more worried that children are not receiving adequate food, clothing, and housing (36 percent).

To address these concerns, voters most want measures that will help children survive. While no one measure clearly dominates, voters believe children will be most helped by providing guaranteed health insurance for all children (26 percent). Another measure that strongly appeals to voters is encouraging employers to provide more family-oriented policies such as family and medical leave, and flexible working hours (20 percent). Relatively fewer voters believe a refundable tax credit for families (18 percent), increased spending for education (16 percent), or publicly supported child care and after-school programs (12 percent) are the best solution.

Naturally, voters want measures that will address their own situations. Providing necessary health insurance is a top priority across the board, but receives the greatest support among lower-income voters (33 percent of those with an income less than $10,000) and those with a high school education or less (31 percent).

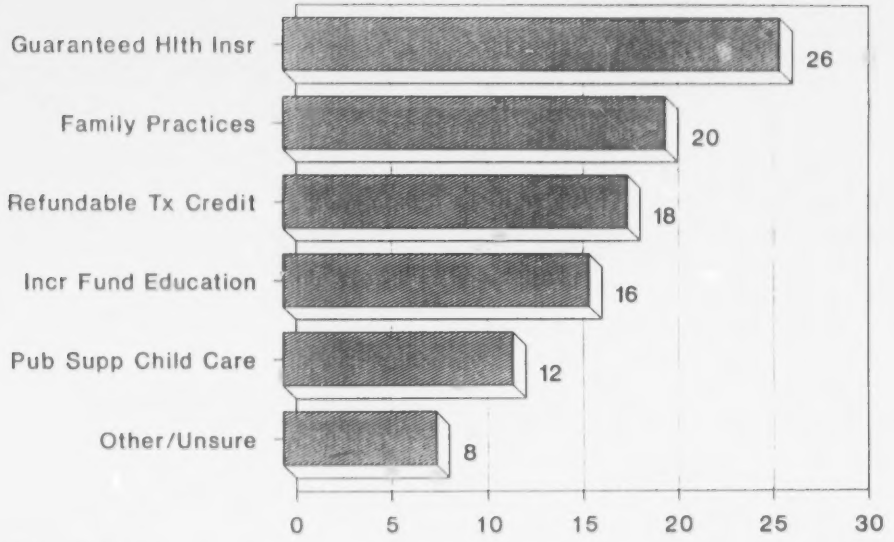
Working women most want family-oriented business policies (26 percent). The strongest support for increased spending for preschool, elementary and secondary education comes from voters with college degrees (22 percent), especially college educated men (23 percent).

A clear majority of voters (55 percent) believe that children in America are worse off now than when their generation was growing up. This atmosphere of a worsening situation for children relates most to voters' concerns about the economy and long-term direction of the country, not necessarily over the deteriorating availability of public supports within their own communities. In fact, while voters believe that children have it harder today, they also believe that the resources and programs available to children in their communities have improved over the last five years (48 percent to 35 percent). A notable exception is voters in large cities. These respondents believe that resources have gotten worse by a margin of 52 percent to 32 percent.

Those voters who have been hardest hit by the recession and feel most economically marginal believe most strongly that the situation for children is worsening – specifically: working women (60 percent), as well as homemakers (63 percent); voters without a high school education (65 percent); black voters (66 percent); voters who live in large cities (60 percent); and voters earning less than $10,000 per year (64 percent). Voters who do not have children are even more likely than parents to believe that children today are worse off, (59 percent and 53 percent respectively).

Republican men (40 percent) and voters in households earning more than $50,000 per year (38 percent) are most likely to think things are better for children today, but still a plurality think things are worse (44 percent and 44 percent respectively).

Support For Measures To Relieve The Burden On Children



Greenberg-Lake/
The Tarrance Group

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U.S. House of Representatives

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March 10, 1992

Donald J. Hernandez, Ph.D., Chief
Marriage and Families Statistics Branch
Bureau of the Census
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Dr. Hernandez:

I want to express my personal appreciation to you for appearing before the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families at our hearing, "America's Families: Conditions, Trends, Hopes and Fears," held here in Washington on February 19, 1992. Your testimony was important to the work of the Committee.

The Committee is now in the process of preparing the transcript for printing. It would be helpful if you would go over the enclosed copy of your remarks to assure that they are accurate, and return the transcript by Friday, March 20, with any necessary corrections. Please include any other information or documents requested during the hearing.

In addition, Congressman Frank Wolf has asked that the following questions be directed to you to add to the record:

Divorce:

1. What percentage of marriages end in divorce in any given year?

2. What percentages of first (never married man and never married woman) marriages end in divorce in any given year?

3. What percentage of second and third marriages end in divorce?

4. How do you define primary or first marriage?

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Child Care Arrangements:

1. Do you measure the average number of hours a child is in substitute care each week during the year? If not, why not?

Family Composition:

1. Please provide information on trends in the following areas:

Of the 250 million people living in the U.S.:

a. What proportion live in married couple households?
b. What proportion live in married couple households with children?
c. What proportion live in single-parent families with children?
d. What proportion live in married couple households where children older than 18 live outside the home?
e. What proportion live in two-parent families with one, two, three, etc. children?

Sincerely,

PATRICIA SCHROEDER
Chairwoman
Select Committee on Children,
Youth and Families

Enclosure

Response of Donald J. Hernandez Ph.D., to Questions Posed by Congressman Frank R. Wolf

Questions asked by Congressman Frank Wolf of Dr. Donald J. Hernández to be added to the record of the hearing held by the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families regarding "America's Families: Conditions, Trends, Hopes, and Fears," held in Washington, DC, on February 19, 1992.

QUESTIONS REGARDING DIVORCE

Divorce:

1. What percentage of marriages end in divorce in any given year?

2. What percentages of first (never married man and never married woman) marriages end in divorce in any given year?

3. What percentages of second and third marriages end in divorce?

4. How do you define primary or first marriage?

ANSWERS REGARDING DIVORCE

Regarding the first question, the National Center for Health Statistics estimates for recent years (1983-1987) that the proportion of married women 15 years of age and over who experienced a divorce in any given year was about 1 percent. Regarding the remaining three questions pertaining to divorce, separate estimates are not available for first, second, and third marriages.

During the hearing, Congressman Wolf also requested an explanation, to be provided for the written record, of the derivation of the estimate that about one-half of marriages may eventually end in divorce. Arthur J. Norton and Louisa F. Miller, colleagues at the Census Bureau, have developed our latest results pertaining to this question in a paper titled "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the 1990s." Broadly, their results suggest for specific cohorts of women that as many as 40-50 percent of first marriages may end eventually in divorce. I have appended two tables presenting their detailed results for women in five-year age groups.

Results are presented separately for the proportion of women who may eventually experience a divorce after their first marriage, and the proportion of women who may eventually experience a divorce after their second marriage. The results are derived for women within specific five-year age groups as follows.

First, for women in 1990 who had been married once (or more), the proportion who had experienced a divorce after first marriage by the specified age was calculated. Second, similar proportions were calculated for older women by five-year age group for two different time periods, 1975-1980 and 1985-1990. Third, increases in the proportions divorced across five-year age groups were calculated for 1975-1980 and 1985-1990 and applied to younger women to estimate the proportion that may eventually experience a divorce in their first marriage, assuming that the divorce patterns of the younger women would mirror those of the older women.

Similar calculations were performed for women who had remarried after the first marriage ended in divorce to calculate the proportion who may eventually experience a second divorce, that is, a divorce in their second marriage.

QUESTIONS REGARDING CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

Child Care Arrangements:

1. Do you measure the average number of hours a child is in substitute care each week during the year? If not, why not?

ANSWERS REGARDING CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

Yes, the Census Bureau recently began collecting data on the number of hours children spend in non-parental care. A report on this topic will be published this summer.

QUESTIONS REGARDING FAMILY COMPOSITION

Family Composition:

1. Please provide information on trends in the following areas:

Of the 250 million people living in the U.S.:

a. What proportion live in married-couple households?
b. What proportion live in married-couple households with children?
c. What proportion live in single-parent families with children?
d. What proportion live in married-couple households where

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children older than 18 live outside the home?

e. What proportion live in two-parent families with one, two, three, etc. children?

ANSWERS REGARDING FAMILY COMPOSITION

During the last few years, the Census Bureau has routinely published results from which answers to four of these five questions can be calculated. As of 1991, 68.5 percent of the U.S. population lived in married-couple households, 41.0 percent lived in married-couple households with children under age 18 in the home, 10.6 percent lived in one-parent family households, and the approximate proportions living in two-parent family households with 1, 2, and 3 or more children under age 18 in the home, respectively, were 12.0, 16.6, and 12.4 percent. The Census Bureau does not collect data which would provide the answer to question 1(d).

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U.S. House of Representatives

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March 11, 1992

Dr. Wren Archer, Deputy Assistant Secretary
of Population Affairs
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 736-E
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Archer:

On February 19, 1992, the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families held a hearing entitled "America's Families: Conditions, Trends, Hopes and Fears."

At that hearing the effectiveness of Title X and Title XX of the Health Service Act was questioned. Congressman Bob McEwen has asked if you would please prepare a statement for the record on the best data available regarding what is working and what is not working to reduce teen pregnancies regarding both Title X and Title XX.

The Committee is now in the process of preparing the transcript for printing. To assure that your statement will be included, it should be received by the Select Committee, 385 Ford House Office Building, no later than Monday, March 23, 1992. Otherwise, it will be assumed you will have no statement and the hearing will be submitted for printing.

Sincerely,

Pat Schroeder

PATRICIA SCHROEDER
Chairwoman
Select Committee on Children,
Youth and Families

CC: Hon. Bob McEwen
Ms. Carol Statuto, Minority Deputy
Staff Director

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Patricia Schroeder
Chairwoman
Select Committee on Children,
Youth and Families
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mrs. Schroeder:

Thank you for your letter of March 11, requesting a statement for the record on what is working and not working in both the Title X and Title XX programs.

As you requested, I am enclosing a statement concerning evaluation of the Title X Family Planning and the Title XX Adolescent Family Life program.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

William R. Archer III, M.D., F.A.C.O.G.
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Population Affairs

Enclosures

TITLE X FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM

There is no statutory requirement for evaluation of the Title X Family Planning program. However, evaluation of Title X projects has been accomplished through several means:

- Individual grantees are evaluated through program reviews which are performed on a 3-year cycle. These reviews are planned and managed by Title X staff in the ten HHS regional offices. Each review consists of on-site review of grantee and selected clinic facilities as well as review of protocols and practices used by the project.

- Evaluation of particular issues of relevance to the efficient management of family planning clinics is also performed by the evaluation program of the Reproductive Health Division of the Centers for Disease Control. Among the products of this activity have been development of an evaluation instrument to allow projects to measure their program effectiveness based on desired versus actual births and on women at risk of unintended pregnancy versus women actually served in the geographic area served by the project, and development of a patient flow analysis instrument to maximize clinic scheduling efficiencies.

- Data collected by the Bureau of Common Reporting Requirements enables review by headquarters and regional staff of trends in the numbers of family planning clients served, their age and poverty status, as well as the unit cost of service. This information is considered by regional offices in review of grant applications and award decisions.

- The family planning program helps to support periodic assessment of family planning trends through the National Survey of Family Growth. This survey provides information on utilization of organized family planning services, of which Title X services are a major component. The most recent cycle of the National Survey of Family Growth specifically identified Title X clinic users and enabled the Department and other researchers to analyze Title X service use patterns using a nationally representative sample.

- Examination of approaches to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of family planning services is also performed by independent researchers under the Title X services delivery research program. Examples include: projects examining the potential for

improving family planning service delivery by integrating these services with other kinds of health care delivery; and how contraceptive and clinic use behavior could be strengthened by use of new outreach, counseling and follow-up strategies.

- Because of the controversial nature of the family planning program, there has been a series of independent evaluations and assessments by GAO, the HHS IG and CRS of the program's performance against requirements in law and regulation, as well as investigation of possible improvements in program efficiency or effectiveness. Among issues reviewed have been program compliance with the abortion prohibition of Section 1008 and the possibility of achieving program savings through bulk purchasing of contraceptives.

Each of these evaluation activities involves measurement of some aspect of the program, but none addresses the core question: Is Title X effective in meeting its legislative goals?

There are many reasons why there has been no comprehensive and definitive evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the Title X program. In the first place, the legislation establishes the goal of providing the services and does not establish any outcome goals such as reduced pregnancy or reduced fertility or reduced population. It would be inappropriate to measure the program against such milestones and would be impossible in any case.

Attempts to evaluate family planning programs are inevitably handicapped by the multiple and varying goals for family planning which clients and researchers bring to the program, (e.g., more predictable fertility, decreased fertility, decreased pregnancies, improved maternal and infant health, etc.) and by the difficulty of getting reliable data on sexual activity, number of pregnancies, whether pregnancy is intended and similar questions.

Finally, the difficulty of isolating the effect of family planning services is complicated by the variety and transience of the motives of clients (prevention of pregnancy, prevention of disease, delay in pregnancy, and desire to become pregnant or to control the timing of pregnancy) and by the relatively small part which Title X plays in reproductive health nationally. Among adolescents, not all are sexually active, of those who are, many either do not use contraception or use it only occasionally.

Of the approximately 50 million American women aged 20-44, about 4 million use Title X services per year. Each year there is substantial turnover in who these 4 million are. Women avoiding pregnancy one year seek to become mothers the next. Many women

prefer private physicians as their source of reproductive health care. Women using clinic medicine when young often seek reproductive health care from private physicians as they become older. Older women show a preference for sterilization as their contraceptive of choice. Moreover, a 1988 study conducted by the Alan Guttmacher Institute found that between 1981 and 1987 there were over 2 million less women at risk of unintended pregnancy. This decline was attributed to increases in the proportion of women over age 30 in the population and increased use of sterilization as a contraceptive method.

Several studies which have looked at the effect of organized family planning programs have concluded that these programs have reduced unwanted fertility. On the other hand, one study found that greater involvement in family planning programs was associated with higher teen abortion and pregnancy rates.

In sum, results of these studies are inconclusive. They have all been hampered by the difficulty of measuring abortions and pregnancies, as well as the lack of control variables such as the prevalence of sexual activity, especially among adolescents.

TITLE XX ADOLESCENT FAMILY LIFE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

The Adolescent Family Life (AFL) Program:

The Adolescent Family Life (AFL) program, (Title XX of the Public Health Service Act), funds demonstration and research projects. It was enacted in 1981 with bipartisan support. The Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs (OAPP) within the Office of Population Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, administers the AFL program.

AFL has an annual budget of $7.8 million. It is the only Federal program that focuses exclusively on developing strategies to address the problems of adolescent sexual behavior and pregnancy. In addressing these issues, AFL strongly emphasizes comprehensive services, family involvement, adoption, and abstinence from adolescent premarital sexual activity.

AFL supports two kinds of family and community-based demonstration programs. Care projects provide an array of health, education and social services to pregnant and parenting adolescents, their infants, male partners and family members. Prevention projects focus on preteens, nonpregnant adolescents and their families. These prevention projects use a variety of abstinence-based curricula aimed at encouraging abstinence from sexual activity among adolescents. AFL has supported the development of 36 abstinence curricula. Some are used in all 50 States and in Canada.

Since its inception in 1982, AFL has supported 155 projects. Approximately two-thirds of these were care projects and one-third were prevention projects. Projects have been located in 46 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Most projects have been in economically depressed areas and inner cities whose populations are mostly poor and are recipients of some kind of public assistance. Populations served by AFL projects are from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Projects can be funded for a maximum of five years.

Both care and prevention projects serve males and females. In care projects, 80 percent of the clients are adolescent females. Prevention projects serve preadolescent and adolescent males and females in approximately equal numbers. Clients must be under the age of 19 at program entry.

Evaluation of AFL Projects:

AFL is one of the few Federal programs whose legislation mandates evaluation of its projects. The AFL legislation requires that all projects use between 1 and 5 percent of the Federal funds awarded for evaluation. Because of OAPP's interest in quality evaluation of its demonstration projects, it has waived the 5 percent limitation on the evaluation amount for some projects whose evaluations appeared to be especially promising. In addition, OAPP created a new category of projects, Evaluation Intensive Projects, to allow a small number of projects with more sophisticated evaluation approaches to use up to 30 percent of their Federal funds for evaluation activities. The AFL legislation further stipulates that evaluations be conducted by an independent evaluator associated with a college or university in the grantee's home State.

In compliance with the legislation, and because of the demonstration nature of AFL projects, OAPP has placed great emphasis on project monitoring and evaluation. OAPP staff conduct regular site visits to the projects and monitor them for compliance with the legislation and terms and conditions of the grant award. Site visits allow OAPP staff to review the programs in action, their facilities, program and financial management practices, protocols and procedures, and evaluation activities. These visits enable OAPP staff to provide immediate guidance and feedback to grantee program staff and evaluators.

Since the purpose of the AFL demonstration projects is to develop a variety of program models suitable for replication in different kinds of communities throughout the Nation, AFL has taken steps to ensure that the evaluation designs of the individual demonstration projects are scientifically rigorous and produce results which allow an assessment of the projects under review.

OAPP has on staff a full time evaluation specialist who provides technical assistance to projects in designing and conducting program evaluation. OAPP sponsors annual conferences for project directors and evaluators where more technical assistance is provided and results shared. OAPP also requires projects to submit annual progress and evaluation reports which the OAPP Chief Evaluator analyzes and synthesizes. The Chief Evaluator also conducts site visits to projects to monitor evaluation activities and to provide additional technical assistance.

OAPP also emphasizes to all projects the importance of both process and outcome evaluations. Process evaluations are useful in demonstrating how programs are started and implemented and provide immediate feedback to the projects themselves as well as to the field of adolescent pregnancy prevention and care in general. Process evaluations are also important as a mechanisms for testing the effectiveness of data management procedures and the use of control and comparison groups. Since the inception of

the program, all of the AFL projects have been involved in process evaluation.

In addition to process evaluations, OAPP stresses the importance of outcome evaluations. Outcomes are very difficult to measure in most public programs including the AFL demonstration programs. Nevertheless, they are vigorously tested to determine whether or not they work. The following sections will focus more specifically on the evaluation of care and prevention projects.

Prevention Projects:

AFL prevention projects are focused on developing abstinence-based prevention education with the primary goals of delaying the onset of sexual activity and thus reducing the incidence of adolescent pregnancy and transmission of sexually transmitted disease. AFL has attempted to develop these programs by building on an existing body of knowledge. For example, programs are designed according to what is known about the developmental levels of adolescence. Study of adolescent development shows that cognitive growth lags behind physical maturation. Until about the age of 16, adolescents are still using concrete thinking skills. As a result, young teenagers have limited ability to recognize the potential impact of their choices. In Michael Young's secondary analysis of a 1986 Harris Poll commissioned by Planned Parenthood, he showed that neither sex education nor knowledge are related to postponement of sexual intercourse or use of contraceptives among adolescents younger than 17. Only 3 percent of teenagers who did not use birth control in 1976 said it was because they did not know how or where to obtain it.[1] A knowledgeable 13 year old is no more likely to use contraceptives than is an uninformed 13 year old. Young concluded, "It may be...that developmentally, younger teen[ager]s are not able to effectively apply the knowledge that they have."[2] As a result of these and other studies, teens in AFL prevention projects are provided with clear definitions and concrete decision-making models.

Enhancing self-esteem and teaching assertiveness skills are an important part of many projects because of the powerful effect of peer pressure on adolescents. Many AFL models use the public

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[1]Zelnik and Kantner, 1979 as cited in Weed, Stan E., and Joseph Olsen "Effects of Family Planning Programs on Teenage Pregnancy-Replication and Extension" Family Perspective, vol. 20, No. 3, 1986.

[2]Ibid. p.21.

health concept of immunization as a strategy for combating social and peer pressures that encourage negative health behaviors. By exposing young people to these "noxious" social influences in small doses, while at the same time enabling them to examine such influences and develop skills to deal with them, this strategy helps young people eventually build up an "immunity" to them. Programs based on this model rely on specific activities that help students identify the origins of pressures to use drugs, smoke, drink or have sex, to examine the motivations behind those pressures and to develop skills to respond effectively.

Parent involvement is encouraged because research has established that communication between parents and their children is associated with lower levels of adolescent sexual activity and pregnancy.[3]

The only 100 percent effective method for prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease is abstinence. Condoms provide only a measure of protection against pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. They can slip, break, or be defective. This is coupled with the fact that teens are not effective contraceptive users. Single women under 18 who use condoms to prevent pregnancy have an 18 percent failure rate in the first year of use. These facts may have been the reason that Dr. Malcolm Potts, one of the inventors of condoms lubricated with spermicides and President of Family Health International, stated that telling a person who engages in high-risk behavior to use a condom "is like telling someone who is driving drunk to use a seat belt."[4] AFL projects recognize the danger of giving adolescents a message that leads them to believe they are safe from pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases as long as they use a condom or other forms of contraceptives when engaging in sexual intercourse. It is important for teens to receive correct information on the effectiveness of the condom in providing protection from AIDS and other STDs.

Much of today's organized response to the AIDS epidemic flows from the assumption that young people are inevitably sexually active. A study cited by Marion Howard and Judith McCabe, described a random sample survey of more than 1,000 sexually active girls aged 16 and younger seen in the Emory/Grady Teen Services Program clinic in Atlanta, Georgia. Of nearly two dozen items thought to be of interest, teenage girls (84 percent) were most likely to indicate that they wanted more information on "how

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[3] Howard, Marion, McCabe, Judith B.,"Helping Teenagers Postpone Sexual Involvement," Family Planning Perspective, January/February 1990, p. 22.

[4] "Will 'Safe Sex' Education Effectively Combat AIDS?," An informal paper by the Department of Education Staff.

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to say 'no' without hurting the other person's feelings".[5] Eunice Kennedy Shriver, after visiting a center for teenage girls, reported that when students were asked what they most wanted to discuss, they chose "how to say 'no' to your boyfriend."[6] The AFL projects work to help convince parents, educators, adolescents themselves, and others that the battle is not lost, because abstinence from sexual activity is a realistic goal for adolescents. Further, they work to convince adults that teenagers require guidance, protection, and support while growing up; that education by itself will not succeed. One way this is achieved is by helping all involved to be aware of the prevalence, causes, and consequences of adolescent sexual activity and, in that context, of the importance and feasibility of the abstinence message. It is also necessary to encourage attitudes which reflect an understanding that sexual activity is not the norm among all, or even the majority of teenagers; that values are important; and that protective, preventive barriers exist in the form of peers, parents, and society. Together, these provide a sound basis for an action plan for the many parts of the community and society working together.

The main focus of AFL prevention projects is to help unmarried adolescents make the decision to delay sexual involvement, develop the skills to do so, and provide the support from parents, other adults and the community in general to reinforce their decisions.

The Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs also funds research on the societal causes and consequences of adolescent premarital sexual relations, contraceptive use, pregnancy and childrearing, as well as evaluative research to identify effective services. This research provides a basis for much of the AFL approach.

Results from Provention Projects:

AFL projects are administered by universities, local school systems, city/county governments, and community based organizations. While not every demonstration project funded by AFL--or any other funding source--is successful on all measures of program impact, a number of AFL projects do document an impact on knowledge, attitudes and behavior.

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[5]Howard, Marion, McCabe, Judith B., "Helping Teenagers Postpone Sexual Involvement," Family Planning Perspectives, January/February 1990, p.22.

[6]"Will 'Safe Sex' Education Effectively Combat AIDS, p.6.

[7]Macdonald, Donald I., "An Approach to the Problem of Teenage Pregnancy," Public Health Reports, July-August 1987, p.384.

Projects, such as the American Home Economics Association's "Project Taking Charge" and the Illinois Committee on the Status of Women's "Project Respect", demonstrate increased knowledge of reproductive health and a shift toward attitudes which are more supportive of abstinence. The Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation's "Community of Caring" also demonstrated these knowledge and attitude changes, as well as participants being less likely to drink, smoke, skip school or be involved in disciplinary actions than students not in the program. "Project Respect" and the "Responsible Social Values Program", located in Franklin County, Ohio, have found a lower incidence of sexual activity for high school students who indicated that they participated in these abstinence-based courses compared to students who did not. Another AFL prevention project, being conducted by the Kenosha County Health Department in Wisconsin, recently reported that there was a substantial decrease in sexual activity among those students who indicated that they were sexually active prior to participating in the program. One AFL project located in a predominately low income, minority, inner-city community reported that, "for the first time in recent years,[there were] no pregnancies among students in the participating elementary schools. In the participating junior high school, the number of pregnant teens decreased from 46 the first year, to 10 the second year."

Through continuous monitoring and technical assistance, OAPP has sought to improve the evaluation of funded projects in terms of design, data collection and analysis. Program evaluation is not an inexpensive or easy activity and the difficulties are exacerbated in interventions attempting to prevent or change a specific behavior. With the exception of those projects funded under the evaluation intensive category, AFL prevention projects are generally able to use only five percent of their Federal budgets for evaluation activities. These projects struggle to carry out rigorous evaluation designs within their budget limitations.

Some problems encountered include:

- Collection of data over time from both treatment and control group students, some of whom are highly transient, is an activity that involves staff resources and the cooperation of school districts and parents. Some AFL prevention projects are able to ask questions at the pre- and post-test points on the sexual behavior of students; other projects find that administrators in the schools in which programs are offered will not approve sensitive questions. In other cases, project directors and their staff have determined that local community groups and the parents of their students do not want adolescents queried about their sexual behavior.

- Adequate control or comparison groups for AFL prevention project evaluations have proven difficult to obtain. For

example, schools do not want to deny a good program intervention to students simply to have them serve as a control group. Some projects have agreed to deliver the AFL program to control group students immediately following completion of the post test. As a result, the ability to compare long term outcomes between treatment and control groups is lost.

- Long term follow-up is both important and difficult to achieve for AFL prevention projects. A key outcome measure for any prevention project is delay in the onset of sexual activity. However, the AFL prevention program intervention is typically delivered to very young adolescents or preadolescents. AFL funding is limited to a maximum of five years and, therefore, even under the best of circumstances, adolescents could only be followed for two or three years and the success of the intervention over a long term period remains unknown in many projects.

- Finally, a solid evaluation always depends on both the completeness of data collection and data quality. Many AFL projects have had to rely on volunteers, teachers or project staff to administer data collection instruments which may lead to inconsistent quality of data collection. A data manager to oversee these activities is often an unaffordable luxury.

In light of these difficulties, OAPP provides intensive technical assistance to grantees with standard evaluations and encourages the submission of Evaluation Intensive applications specifically designed to produce quality information on the effectiveness of the demonstration evaluation. Evaluations are now in progress that will follow up with groups of students one and two years after their participation in a prevention curriculum to assess the impact of the intervention on behavioral outcomes. Projects in Utah, Oregon, Illinois and California have incorporated longitudinal designs into their program evaluations to assess the impact of abstinence-based prevention projects on the initiation of sexual activity among adolescents.

Care Projects:

Adolescent Family Life care projects attempt to test innovative approaches to the provision of comprehensive health, education and social services to pregnant adolescents, adolescent parents, their children, families and male partners. The projects provide services that will improve not only birth outcomes and the health of infants, but will go beyond that to improve life outcomes for the adolescent parents, such as self-sufficiency and

parenting skills, completion of a high school education, and reduction in the incidence of repeat pregnancies.

Projects are required to provide, through direct services or through referral to community service providers, the following 10 core services defined by Title XX: pregnancy testing and maternity counseling; adoption counseling and referral services; prenatal and postnatal care; nutrition information and counseling; referral for screening and treatment of venereal disease; referral to pediatric care; family life educational services; educational and vocational services; mental health and other physical health services; counseling and referral for family planning services.

They also may provide such supplemental services as referral to residential or maternity home services, child care, consumer education and homemaking, counseling for family members, transportation and outreach services to families of adolescents.

In addition, as programs have seen clients affected by problems such as substance abuse, family dysfunction, sexual abuse and AIDS, they have referred clients for treatment in these areas.

Care projects have been carried out by a variety of types of service providers, including social service agencies, residential programs, health departments, university medical centers, grass roots community organizations, schools, crisis pregnancy centers and YWCAs.

To ensure that clients receive the needed services, most projects employ innovative features such as case management, a process whereby a case manager, usually a social worker, works one-on-one with a pregnant adolescent, throughout her pregnancy and early parenting period. The case management process focuses on the total needs of the client and includes outreach efforts to bring the client to program services early in pregnancy, needs assessment, case planning, service referral, client monitoring, advocacy for services that are difficult to secure in the community, and collection of information on client outcomes to gauge the success of the project and to inform the project of areas that might need refinement.

Other innovative approaches include family therapy, home visits, use of community volunteers and outreach workers to bring high risk clients into a program, and peer counseling.

Family involvement, including services to young fathers, and the promotion of adoption as an alternative to early parenting are also unique features of these programs.

The "Teen Pregnancy Program Computerized Information System" (TPPCIS), a "minimum data set" complete with code books, computer files (for data input) and computer programs (for client tracking and reporting) was developed by AFL for grantees and is currently

in use at most sites. While use of it is voluntary, training and ongoing technical assistance in the use of TPPCIS is provided to grantees.

With TPPCIS, AFL has taken the lead in offering a data system that is recognized nationwide as a core data information system for programs serving pregnant and parenting adolescents. TPPCIS has been adopted with slight modification and recommended by other national organizations funding adolescent pregnancy and parenting projects, e.g., the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation and Child Trends, as a core data set for all programs serving this population. TPPCIS appears as Part III of a recently published monograph entitled Evaluating and Monitoring Programs for Pregnant and Parenting Teens, edited by J.J. Card. The goal of AFL Care projects is to provide services to adolescents throughout the pregnancy and early parenting period that will assist teens in ultimately becoming productive contributors to family and community life. Some findings include:

- o Evaluation results from AFL demonstration projects have shown that adolescent mothers who received project services tend to have better birth outcomes. Projects also report increased school enrollment and employment as well as reductions in the expected incidence of repeat pregnancies.

- o The comprehensive service delivery model for pregnant and parenting teens developed at Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department in Tacoma, Washington was replicated with State funding in four additional high risk counties in the State.

- o The reported successes of the "continuous counselor" comprehensive city-wide service delivery model for pregnant and parenting teens, developed by the Teen Age Pregnancy and Parenting Project (TAPP) in San Francisco, were instrumental in the State's authorization of $5.5 million to replicate this project in 29 additional sites in California.

- o TAPP was also adapted to a rural project in Nampa, ID. The evaluation found that program clients had a significantly lower incidence of low birthweight births than WIC clients or a synthetic comparison group of adolescent mothers.

Conclusion:

In addition to documenting the impact of abstinence education on knowledge, attitudes and behavior of adolescents; and of comprehensive health, education and social services on good birth outcomes for the babies and good life outcomes for

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adolescent parents, the AFL program has made several other important contributions to the field in terms of adolescent pregnancy prevention and delivery of care services to pregnant and parenting adolescents. They include the following:

- OAPP has funded 155 projects on a local level over the past ten years. As a result many agencies throughout the country now have experience in evaluation techniques and are more committed to the need for and use of evaluation as services are being delivered to clients.

- OAPP developed and disseminated a Self-Evaluation Manual which is used by all AFL projects and a number of other pregnancy prevention projects. This manual enables all grantees, particularly new grantees, to develop and implement sound managerial policies and procedures for every phase of the program.

- OAPP has funded the development, implementation and testing of 36 curricula for abstinence-based education that are now in use in 50 States.

- OAPP has also developed the Teen Pregnancy Program Computerized Information System (TPPCIS), a data set recognized and used nationwide by organizations involved in adolescent pregnancy and parenting issues.

- AFL helped support the development of case management in its care programs as a means of assessing total needs, providing services and monitoring clients. This method of service delivery is now in widespread use as a mechanism for serving pregnant and parenting adolescents.

- AFL demonstration projects are working to document process evaluations of their programs that will be useful to other agencies in their efforts to implement adolescent prevention and care projects. Some of those models include examples of how to:

  - Develop a comprehensive care project from a nutrition only project;
  - Transform a school-based project to a community-based project;
  - Involve parents and empower community residents;
  - Provide services for adolescent fathers;
  - Develop a network of community health centers to deliver comprehensive care services;

- o Develop an effective prevention project within a public health department;
- o Facilitate a home-based family therapy intervention for high risk pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers;
- o Replicate projects in other communities and states.

In its ten year history, AFL has produced sufficient evidence to indicate that the AFL approaches can meet the goals of assisting adolescents in postponing sexual activity and in helping pregnant and parenting teens and their infants to have positive health and life outcomes.

AFL is continuing to build on this body of knowledge to enhance its ability to test the AFL strategies among an increasingly diverse population.

U.S. House of Representatives
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
[illegible]
[illegible]

March 10, 1992

Greg J. Duncan, Ph.D., Program Director
Survey Research Center
University of Michigan
428 Thompson Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Dear Dr. Duncan:

I want to express my personal appreciation to you for appearing before the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families at our hearing, "America's Families: Conditions, Trends, Hopes and Fears," held here in Washington on February 19, 1992. Your testimony was important to the work of the Committee.

The Committee is now in the process of preparing the transcript for printing. It would be helpful if you would go over the enclosed copy of your remarks to assure that they are accurate, and return the transcript by Friday, March 20, with any necessary corrections. Please include any other information or documents requested during the hearing.

In addition, I would appreciate your answers to the following questions to add to the record of the hearing:

1. Mr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation testified at the hearing that virtually none of the members of families in the bottom fifth of the income distribution engages in work for pay. What Census Bureau evidence is there regarding the extent to which members of poor families work?

2. Mr. Robert Rector of The Heritage Foundation suggested at the close of the hearing that income was miscalculated by the Census Bureau and others by failing to take into account federal medical and welfare assistance to families. He implied that if such assistance were taken into account, fewer families would actually be considered poor and family

income comparisons with other countries were invalid as a result. He also stated that average welfare benefits for a mother with two children in the average state are way over the poverty threshold. Please comment on the validity of his remarks?

3. There were conflicting statements at the hearing about Census Bureau data on trends in the number of low-, middle- and high-income families with children over the past twenty years. Would you provide the Select Committee with information to clarify this issue for the record?

Sincerely,

Pat Schroeder

PATRICIA SCHROEDER
Chairwoman
Select Committee on Children,
Youth and Families

Enclosure

RESPONSE FROM GREG J. DUNCAN, PH.D., TO QUESTIONS POSED BY CONGRESSWOMAN PATRICIA SCHROEDER

ISR

INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH / THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN / P.O. BOX 1248 / ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48106-1248
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March 16, 1992

Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder
Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families
Room H2-385
Annex 2
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Schroeder:

Thank you again for providing me with the opportunity to testify before your committee for the hearing "America's Families: Conditions, Trends, Hopes and Fears."

My responses to the questions you pose in your letter of March 10, 1992 are as follows:

1. Census Bureau evidence regarding work among poor families. Mr. Rector was wrong when he testified that "if you look at the bottom 20 percent of households...there's virtually no earnings down there at all." The Census Bureau's Current Population Survey for 1990 shows that more than one in five (21.2%) poor families with children contain at least one person who worked full time, year around and a clear majority (63.4%) contain at least one member who worked at least some amount. (These figures can be found in the U.S. Bureau of the Census's report P-60, No. 175, Poverty In the United States: 1990, Table 19, p. 128)

2. Poverty rates after adjustments to income. The official definition of poverty rests on a comparison of total cash income and a poverty "threshold" based on family size. As summarized in Patricia Ruggle's excellent book Drawing the Line (Urban Institute Press, 1991), there are many problems with the official definition. Correcting some of its deficiencies (e.g., adding in the cash-equivalent value of food stamps or Medicaid) would cause the estimated number of poor families to fall; correcting other deficiencies (e.g., adjusting the line for growth in real living standards) would increase the estimated number of poor. The National Academy of Science has organized a panel to investigate this issue and make recommendations for change.

The Census Bureau calculates a poverty measure that incorporates many of the adjustments that Mr. Rector recommends. The official poverty rate for children in 1990 was 20.6%. Adjustments for taxes paid, the receipt of the Earned Income Tax Credit, noncash transfers such as food stamps and Medicaid, and imputed rental income dropped this rate to 14.9% -- a drop to be sure but hardly an "abolishment of poverty" as Mr. Rector claims. Similar adjustments to the poverty rate for the elderly drop it

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from 12.2% to 6.2%. (These figures can be found in the U.S. Bureau of the Census's report P-60, No. 176-RD, Measuring the Effect of Benefits and Taxes on Income and Poverty: 1990, Table 2, p. 40-41).

These kinds of adjustments do not invalidate the comparison of poverty rates across countries. Such comparisons typically define poverty in a country as some fraction, usually 50%, of median size-size-adjusted family income. Universal noncash benefits such as health care benefit all families in these countries and do not affect the relative ranking that underlies the poverty counts.

3. Trends in the numbers of low-, middle- and high-income families with children. There was some confusion about the changing fraction of families in different income categories. The source of the confusion is that one set of figures described trends in the income of all families while my testimony described trends in the income of families with children. In 1990 there were about 34 million families with children and about 31 million families without children. The economic fortunes of families with children have worsened relative to families without children, so the two sets of trends tell somewhat different stories, particularly regarding the number of low-income families.

Since the committee is concerned with families with children, the numbers listed in footnote 1 of my testimony are the most relevant: In 1978, the fractions of families with children with incomes below $20,000, $20,000-$50,000, $50,000-$100,000 and above $100,000 (in 1990 prices) were .226, .496, .244 and .034, respectively. The corresponding fractions in 1990 were .272, .443, .241 and .044, respectively. Thus, the fraction of low-income families with children grew significantly between 1978 and 1990 -- from 22.6% to 27.2%. (The figures for 1978, when the price level was almost exactly half of its 1990 level, come from P-60, No. 123, Table 24. The figures for 1990 come from the Census Bureau's P-60, No. 174, Table 18.)

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance to your committee.

Sincerely,

Greg J. Duncan

ISBN 0-16-038919-4

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